

After Action Report Newsletter -- March 2024

Live Free Or Die Roll: American Revolution

King For A Year: War of the Roses

Pursue and Destroy

Crown Attained

Herding Cats

Burgundy

Space Base Binge: Eurogaming

Binge Base I: *Space Base* Quartet

Binge Base II: *Space Base* Highlights

You Win!!! *Space Base* Victory

Space Base: Grace Under Pressure

Blitzkrieg Stalled: Arras Counterattack 1940

Romanitas: *Vae Victis* Issue 173

NEWS

NASA RPG: Hubble Telescope MIA

LeeCon II: NJ Game Day - May 18, 2024

New Wargame: The 1941 US Army Maneuvers

New Wargame: 1940 Invasion of Iceland

Fall In 2023: Show Report

New Wargame: *Cities of the Damned*

Back In Print: *Hyperspace Hack*

Books I've Read

The Samurai Castle Master: Todo Takatora

Tuskegee Airmen: Dogfighting LW and Jim Crow

Armies of the Crimean War: 1853-1856

Philippines Naval Campaign 1944-45 (Cam399)

A Prisoner of Stalin: Luftwaffe Pilot 1944-45

Clean Sweep: VIII Fighter Command 1943-1945

Staff Cars In Germany WW2: Vol. 3

Tenth Army Commander: WWII S. B. Buckner jr

The Third Macedonian War: Battle of Pydna

Hitler's Last Days: Fuhrerbunker & Beyond

Sniping Rifles: War Against Japan 1941-45

WWII Grossdeutschland Division: Elite 255

PZL-104 Wilga 35A: Single No. 46

PZL-104 Wilga 35A Military: Single No. 47

M111 Heavy Motorcycle: Single Vehicle No. 09

Strong in Will: Working for US Embassy 1939-45

The Destroyer USS Kidd: Anatomy of a Ship

The Convoy: HG-76 December 1941

Tokyo 1944-45: Air Campaign 40

Saab 35 Draken: Duke Hawkins 31

End of the Spanish Civil War: Alicante 1939

Polish Armoured Trains 1921-1939: Vol. 3

Hitler's Henchmen: Nazi Executioners

Napoleon's Cavalry, Artillery, Technical

Gallipoli Sniper: Life of Billy Sing





Pre-game kibitzing. L to R: Chris, Phil, Mike, Umpire Marc, Dave, and Jay.

Live Free Or Die Roll: American Revolution

by Russ Lockwood

Marc gamemastered an American Revolution meeting engagement using a variation of *Fire & Fury* rules. The British marched on from both ends of the table, catching the Americans in a pincer. The question was whether the Americans could escape the trap and give the British a bloody nose.

My brave Continental troops, who started in the middle.

By random die roll, Phil, Dave, and Jay took the British and Chris, Mike and I took the Americans. Chris faced off against Jay on the north side of the table while Mike and I faced Phil and Dave on the south side of the table. The British had to meet in the middle. We Americans had to prevent that, or at least hold on long enough and escape.

Both sides' troops were a mix of militia and regulars, with all the benefits and detriments that entailed.

American Mike maneuvers his troops as British Phil heads into the attack while British Dave begins to loop around to the open flank.

Opening Moves

British Phil moved to engage Mike immediately, while British Dave needed time to loop behind him towards the open



flank on the west. Of course, that's the spot I headed towards as well. I had four four-stand regiments (two from Maryland and two from Virginia), a cannon, a brigade leader, and the C-in-C.

Of course, I confused the Marylanders and Virginian troops from the outset. It would not be the only time in the game.

On the north side, British Jay stumbled out of the gate, with one regiment refusing the move for three solid turns. Not a shot had been fired. Not an enemy sighted. Everyone else in line of sight moved out, but by dint of rolling a 1 on a d10, the regiment remained rooted in place.

Like *Fire & Fury*, this AWI version uses a d10 die roll per unit to see if it moves. Modifiers stack up early on to aid a unit in moving and changing formation, but a 1 is a dead stop. That caused Jay to move cautiously -- he didn't want to leave 25% of his force behind.

Chris, with militia, waited behind a fence. The longer it took for the British to arrive, the longer it would take for the two pincers to meet.

End of Turn 2 on the south side. Top: Mike and Phil face off in a firefight while Russ' Continentals hurry up to extend the American line.



Opening Firefight

Mike and Phil soon were in a firefight, Mike gaining an advantage being behind a stone wall, but British Phil with the advantage of better troops that could take damage and still remain on the field. Phil eventually advanced to stand behind his own wall.

As British Dave edged around to the flank, Mike fell back to another wall to refuse his right flank while pushing his left flank forward.

I wheeled my east-facing marching troops to the south and pushed them forward, attaining the benefit of a stone wall. My left was a bit open between me and Mike, so I pressed the cannon into service here.

First Blood: My red flag troops deal Dave's leading British unit a bloody nose. Alas, the regiment with the yellow flag stopped for a picnic.



Alas, my left-most regiment, meant to expand from column to line to connect to the cannon, inexplicably decided to stop for a picnic. The dreaded roll of "1" strikes again. At least the British were in view. My next roll with this regiment was better -- I think a "2" -- but resulted in a "Can't change formation" result. So they stayed in column. It must have been contagious, for my other supporting regiment steadfastly refused to change formation when it needed to. Talk about being paralyzed with fear. By the time the supporting unit rolled better, the British were changing across the field.

British Dave did not suffer such maladies. Up came his cannon, up came his troops, and he spread out into line in glorious precision.

We traded fire and his lead regiment in the field suffered more than me behind the wall, being eventually forced to stand and take it from his own "Can't change formation rolls" -- more plentiful when troops are disordered as his were.

Dave fired at my troops trapped in column and finally missed. However, I noticed that he failed to fire his cannon at all, so I pointed this out, added the fire factors, and turned my troops into disordered again. He thanked me.

First half British movement on Turn 3.

A D8 Commander in a D10 World

Sure enough, those column troops failed yet again to roll their way to change formation. It was at that time I realized that of all the d10 dice that were handed out pre-game, one of them was actually a d8. Guess who had it?

Talk about moving with one foot tied behind my ass and fighting with one hand behind my back...

I picked up a real d10, which did me no favors initially, but at least I saw rolls of 9s and 10s at the tail end of the game. It wasn't exactly for want of a nail, the battle was lost, but for want of two sides of a polyhedron...

Chris' militia (right) awaits Jay's troops held up by one picnicking regiment.

The first d10 roll I made to sort the column into line was so bad, the regiment fled over the hill to grandma's house. The next die roll to stop the running failed and they ran back some more. At that point in time, the brigade commander and what was left of the unit sorted itself out and was closer to the south side than the north side. I headed the battered unit to reinforce Chris, whose flank was being threatened by Jay's one immobile regiment.

On the North Side

Jay's juggernaut finally got some steam up and started to stretch Chris' line. No firefights had started, but the laggard regiment at least made it to the fence. This stalemate came from the run of "1"s Jay rolled at the beginning of the game.

Mike and Phil's melee madness. Mike wins up top. Phil wins at bottom. White caps are casualties. Square counters are disordered markers.



Fast and Furious Melees

British Phil had enough of shooting. He gathered his lads and charged. On Mike's left, Mike performed heroic feats and repulsed the Loyalists. Not only did Mike stand, he counterattacked and drove them from the field, his troops in hot pursuit.

Dueling routs: Mike chases Phil at top and Phil chases Mike at left.

Alas, on his right, the roles reversed. British Phil took hits coming across the no-man's land between the walls, but delivered a significant spanking of the Americans, reeling them backwards. Phil's breakthrough charge took out my cannon as well.

British Dave charged across the fields and with his two fresh regiments, one supporting the other, sent most of my wall boys packing. The other held its ground, but then again, it wasn't charged.

Time, Gentlemen

As the evening's three or so hours had passed, GM Marc called the game and examined the field. The south side Americans and British were intact, so that was a stalemate.

The north side was a different story. Mike had routed half of Phil's troops and put some damage on the remainder. But Phil's other half had routed half of Mike's troops plus forced my cannon crew to run away. The Brits were hurting, but advancing and retreating at the same time.

Dave took significant damage to two of his regiments (50% losses each), but his other two were in pristine shape and chased my troops off the wall and up the hill.

Yet, the Americans had prevented the British pincers from meeting in the middle.

With that, Marc awarded the Americans a slight victory.

Thanks, All

Thanks, Marc, for an interesting scenario and Dave for again hosting.

End of game. Umpire Marc (upper right corner) calls it a slight American victory.



King For A Year: War of the Roses

by Russ Lockwood : *The Lion of Stockton (aka Fauconberg)*

Pursue and Destroy

"Are you really Sir Russell, the Lion of Stockton?"

The aging warrior, seated at a table in the alehouse, stood up, hand straying to the hilt of his sword. His livery flowed across his chest -- a golden lion with an enigmatic smile standing proud atop a field of blue and red. He glared at the boy who intruded. "I am," he intoned.

The lad's eyes opened wide. A trace of fear edged into his voice. "Were-were you in the battle for the crown?"

The knight's eyes narrowed as he growled a reply. "I was."

The boy thought about fleeing, but remained frozen in place, caught between curiosity and panic. He glanced at the Lion's retinue, now suddenly attentive upon their commander, as conversation ebbed into silence. "Can-can you tell me about the battle?"

The Lion's sigh bore a hint of exasperation. "I can."

"Then what happened?"

"I won."

Curiosity shunted panic to the back of the lad's mind. "You did?"

"I did."

"How?"

"Not by my hand," Sir Russell groaned. "But I shall tell the tale. It started with a simple maneuver."

The Lion of Stockton from last year. Photo by Keith.

The DBWR Shire of Burkley

We snarling five lords decided diplomacy by word was overrated and diplomacy by combat more effective at settling differences over who gets the crown.

The terrain proved suitably English with rolling hills, brush, and patches of woods dividing up the battlefield. The so-called Treacherous River formed one edge and the Oblivion Forest the other.

In between were two main impediments: The Chevron Tangle, on account of the V shape of the combo of woods, hills, and brush, and the Cyclops Beard, on account of a single, circular hill called "the Eye" among a field of brush with woods at one end. It also had a small patch of woods on the side called Cyclops Sideburn.

The Treacherous Woods sat along the river. A small sliver of a ridge bumped up more or less between the Cyclops Beard and the Treacherous Woods.

By dint of random persuasion, The Lion of Stockton, aka, Fauconberg, teamed with the Earl of Stafford (Dan) to enter the south side of the battlefield. The Lion was on the right and Stafford on the left.

Against them to the north arrayed the glittering horde of the Earl of Cromwell (Ed) in the center with the Burgundian force under Michael the Bald (Mike) to his right near the Treacherous Stream and the Duke of Suffolk (John) to his left near the Chevron Tangle.

The enemy (l to r): Mike, Ed, and John.



Deployment was hidden due a sudden influx of cardboard fog...

The cardboard fog before it lifts.

Three on Two

It would've been nice to have three on three, but alas, it would be three on two.

To compensate for the "extra" pips, or properly, extra potential pips, on the three-player side as well as compensate for the troops of an entire command, Dan gave us enough extra stands to equalize the number of stands as well as a sub-commander and a "d2" roll for pips (odd roll = 1 pip and even roll = 2 pips) for that small command. Each of these sub-commanders also came with a "free" pip.

The Lion of Stockton's troops on the march to the battlefield. The die with the "4" showing is the average die for pips. The yellow chip is the re-roll chip. The labels are attached to the underside of the base with rubber cement and list the name, type, movement, and combat factors of the troops.

Hence, add the two free commander pips to the 2 to 4 pips from rolling and you get a 4-6 range of pips. It's a tad higher than the usual 3 to 6 pips from a normal pip roll on a d6 average die (or 2 to 7 with a normal d6) plus commander pip of a separate command.

Each pip allows you to move a block of troops of any size. Thus, if you keep all your troops together in that same block, all you need is the commander pip to move it. As the game progresses and you deal with unexpected losses, pushbacks, maneuvers, and flanking efforts, those pips start to be used pretty quickly.

Furthermore, if a unit is out of sight from a commander, say in the middle of a woods or on the other side of a hill, you need an extra pip. And further furthermore, a line of non-Skirmisher troops in a woods needs one pip per stand or column to move.

Here I must offer a mea culpa to my main opponent John. My understanding was that if I had a non-Skirmisher unit -- in this case spear -- partially out of the woods, it could move with the main block of troops without an extra pip.





Incorrect as it turns out.
 Now, since I was chasing John, a battle with those spears never came into play. I could have dropped them in a column behind the other units in the clear terrain and used a pip whenever they finally cleared the woods. It's a command and control nuance we inserted into the original DBA foundation rules over the decades to mimic medieval limits.

We also received two random cards. I drew the first that boosted my breakpoint from 33% of my command to 40% (an extra stand or two makes a difference after multiple rounds of melee), indicating that The Lion's forces had a more resilient morale. The other card was good for a free move. As it turns out, I didn't use either, but I get ahead of myself.

Left: My setup on my left with the subcommander's subcommand. Up top, the enemy.

Below: My setup on my right. I also received two cards. All commanders (not subcommanders) get a re-roll chip.

The Cardboard Fog of War

Per usual, we set up our troops in secret, placing a barrier of old boardgame boards across the table.

When all are done, the boards come down and voila! We see what we hath wrought.

Below: The fog lifts! Photo by Mike.





Above: The enemy marches to its right, our left. In upper right, John sends out a pair of skirmishers.

Right Face, March!

Our opponents, from our point of view stretched from left to right: Michael the Bald (Mike) and his Burgundians, the Earl of Cromwell (Ed) in the center, and the Duke of Suffolk (John) on the right. As Dan was on our left and me on the right, the Earl of Stafford (Dan) mostly faced the Burgundians along with part of Cromwell while Fauconberg (me) mostly faced Suffolk along with part of Cromwell.

The enemy marches to its flank. Mike starts his grand splintering plan adjacent to Cyclops Beard. L to r: Michael the Bald, Ed Cromwell, and John Suffolk.
Photo by Dan.



The first major decision our opponents made, labeled Clever Plan Number 1, was immediately turn to their right, our left, and march towards the Treacherous River. The idea was to head to the more open ground in front of the Burgundians and double-team Stafford in the process. On the other end of their line, Suffolk would in effect refuse the flank.

It was a brilliant plan except for one teeny tiny detail: Mike couldn't roll anything but a "1" for pips for the first three turns of this Clever Plan Number 1. As he had splintered his force into multiple blocks, the lack of pips meant a lack of ability to coordinate his disparate elements.

Had he been in a monolithic block, this wouldn't have been a problem to face right and move over these three turns. But with light horse and crossbowmen heading towards Stafford as two separate "blocks" and multiple "blocks" behind these, the splintering ground the march to the river to a spectacular halt.

Run 'Em Down

Dan suffered no such die roll ailments and did an incredibly smart move in shoving his skirmishers into the Cyclops Beard almost to the edge. These troops performed one important task: restricted enemy march moves.

In DBWR, you may use more pips to march troops beyond their tactical movement allowance, but only if the troops remain outside a stick (6 segments). Once they hit that limit, they must stop, even if they have more movement to go. By placing his troops within a stick, Dan caused further problems to Cromwell's rightward migration.

Meanwhile, Stafford optimized his pips to transfer the bulk of his forces to his left around Cyclops Beard and towards the Treacherous River.

Skirmisher Stunts

The Duke of Suffolk understood this idea well and shoved a pair of skirmishers forward and slightly out to his flank, parking them on the reverse slope of a hill in the Chevron Tangle. That position did two clever things: first it was optimally placed to insert the one-stick interdiction limit on most of my path towards him, and second, it kept his skirmishers safe from arrow barrages of my longbow until I was able to move atop and around the hill.

Start of Turn 4. My big wheeling movement (bottom) is trying to catch Suffolk, but two pesky and well placed skirmishers in the Chevron Tangle defy the march. Mike is in full fragmentation mode between the Cyclops Beard and Treacherous Woods.

Move I did as fast as I could in a monolithic block, using extra pips for extra march moves -- at least until I hit the one-stick limit. That still left about half my command on the extreme right next to Oblivion Forest outside the limit and able to march move. As this was the outer rim of the wheel, I also needed it for them to keep up with the inner troops.

Tail-end Charlie was a stand of swordsmen who had no business being in woods. So when Chuckie hit one of the patches of woods in the Chevron Tangle, I didn't have the extra two pips (out of line of sight and beyond a stick distance from the commander) to spend at that moment, so he got left behind in the brush.

I had detached a skirmish line to work through this patch and go up the hill to reach Suffolk's skirmishers. I had enough pips to keep the main force moving in a wheel to get at Suffolk and push my own skirmishers to engage Suffolk, but not enough for Tail-End Charlie.

That was a small error.

Another was detaching a skirmisher from my sub-commander to join the main force a turn too late. That meant I needed to spend two pips, not one, to get it to line up with the others. Those were the two pips needed to move Charlie. That was a dumb error.

The middle of Turn 6. The Lion is getting closer to shafting Suffolk's skirmishers and is shafting Cromwell's skirmishers. The Burgundians slowly align, but that gives Stafford (Dan) time to shift his own troops.

First Blood

On my side of the battlefield, I finally reached the top of the hill as well as edged around it to engage Suffolk's



skirmishers with arrow fire. The result was that my overwhelming firepower routed both skirmishers -- directly into my movement path.

So, these skirmishers performed their duty anew without John having to spend a pip. He ultimately spent two pips each to rally them, and I managed to finally shaft them into oblivion, but the delay was done. Except for this minor skirmish, my troops were never in the battle.

End of Turn 7. The skirmishers rout, holding up the Lion yet again. Up top, Stafford gets into line and brings in the last of his troops. Cromwell lines up opposite Cyclops Beard with spear.

In the Cyclops Sideburn

My subcommander plodded forward with his pike and longbow, held up by one of Ed's skirmishers perched in Cyclops Sideburn. Oh, I shafted the rogue to no effect, but Cromwell pulled him back beyond the woods line to keep up the one-stick radius while edging cavalry into the gap between Beard and Sideburn.

My longbow troops were caught between wanting to enter the Sideburn and go after the single skirmisher and not wanting to be charged in the flank in the brush. I had the advantage, but given the way I was rolling for battle, I erred on the side of caution. I was also waiting for the sledgehammer of my main force to arrive on the enemy's flank.

In the Cyclops Beard

With Stafford filling out our line from Cyclops Beard to Treacherous Woods, Michael the Bald was lost in a swirl of pips-hogging maneuvers. Cromwell needed to expand the line to bring more troops against Stafford. He ordered his spear and cavalry into the Beard to support Michael the Bald's initial piecemeal attacks on Stafford.

That's a desperate move.

It ended well...

...for Stafford's troops.

Cromwell's spear troops that weren't killed outright were tumbled back out of the woods.

End of Turn 10. John rallies his skirmishers. Mike extends his line to Treacherous Woods.

Twixt Beard and River

The Burgundians finally sorted out most of their troops and advanced into melee. Their advanced light horse and crossbowmen were long since routed through the main line, but up came the pike and longbow.



The clash next to the Beard went back and forth, a unit here and there eliminated. A Burgundian bow unit perished. Stafford's cannon base was annihilated. The Burgundian pike ground forward.

Turn 12: Stafford (yellow tags) battle pike, bow, and cavalry from Michael the Bald and swordsmen from Cromwell.

The melee extended through the middle and finally to the edge of the Treacherous Woods and Treacherous River. Here, a charge by knights backed by Michael the Bald himself ran over some unsupported bowmen. As the knights advanced, Stafford concentrated his handgunners on the knights. They went down under a shower of arrows.

Michael the Bald, no fool he, immediately galloped for safer ground away from the arrow rain.

It was at this point that one of his pike units suffered a massive loss and vaporized. Just like that, his front line became unhinged.

Surrender

With the repulse of his spear in Cyclops Beard, the decimation of the Burgundians (reached their 33% break point for die rolling for a possible retreat), and the ominous tramping of a fully intact Lion of Stockton bearing down upon his other flank, Cromwell called for terms before more English blood was spilled. The Lion and Stafford accepted the surrender. No doubt some fiefdoms would change hands...

King Who?

With Stafford and the Lion victorious, Stafford had done the lion's share of the work. No doubt he deserved to be crowned king, with the Lion as absolute heir, regardless of Stafford's family connections. No doubt that would generate another battle for the crown, but that's a battle for another year.

Thanks Dan, for hosting, and to all the other nobles for a good game.

Now we get to hear from the other nobles and their own viewpoints.

End of the game for the Lion. Skirmishers eliminated and the rest of the troops heading for Suffolk's troops.





Above: Dan (Stafford) on Turn 2 marches around the Cyclops Beard to oppose the Burgundian (Mike) light horse. Stafford's skirmishers begin to infiltrate the Beard.

Crown Attained

by the Earl of Stafford (Daniel)

For the 22nd Annual "War of the Roses" event, I asked the players if they wanted a 2-on-2 game with me umpiring (as I've done many times) or if they wanted to try a 3-on-2 game. The majority chose the 3-on-2 option, as they wanted me to play as well. Sides were determined randomly, with Russ and me being on the 2-player side.

The Math of Balance

To balance a 3-command vs 2-command, I gave each of the commands on the 2-player side an additional 65 points that included a 20-point sub-general with a d2 for pips. This gave an average of 10 pips a turn for the 2-player side vs an average of 10.5 pips for the 3-player side, while allowing a second command stand to help command the significantly larger commands on the 2-player side.

The 2-player side also had 2 cards per player: one was a "Free Order" card that allowed one order at no pip cost and the other was a "+1" pip card. Each could be used once per game.

Each player on both sides still had one "Advantage Chip" to use once during the game that could be used to re-roll one combat (both sides re-roll with the same modifiers) or add +1 to the die roll before resolving a combat, or add +1 pip to their command roll. I had actually assembled three commands before the game and two of them ended up being used.

The Battlefield and Battle

I allowed Fauconberg (Russ) to choose the table side for our 2-man team and also choice of left or right command. He chose right (and wayyyy right) although our commands did start in contact at the center with Fauconberg's "Calais Garrison" (sub-commander's force) aligned with Stafford's command.

After turn 1, Stafford (Daniel) quickly realized that the Burgundians (Michael) would try to engage my vulnerable left while their center would remain passive. Advancing up the center would take too long to cross over and engage, so I turned my command left to properly form up to face the Burgundians while sending my skirmishers through the woods to pin down any enemy re-deployment in response to my moves.

From the Burgundian perspective. If you look closely, Mike (red tags) has five separate blocks of troops – and if he only rolls a 1 on pips for movement...
Photo by Mike.



My archers on the left sent the Burgundian Light Horse routing (and eventually off the table), which allowed my maneuvers to continue uninterrupted.

Russ did his best to swing his command to drive off the skirmishers left by the Duke of Suffolk (John) to delay Fauconberg's advance, while the Duke of Suffolk (John) pulled his command back towards Cromwell's (Ed) command and refuse their left flank.

Die-Roll Bungling by Burgundy

The Burgundians also tried to move their command to the right to allow Cromwell's command some deployment room to attempt to double-team Stafford's command. Cromwell did his re-deployment effortlessly with several pips scores of 5s and 4s, but Michael the Bald was not as efficient with many, many low pip scores (1s) stymieing his efforts.

Several turns later, Mike is in better shape, but Dan has stretched into a line to secure the flank. Photo by Mike.

Stafford managed to re-deploy most of his command and advance to initiate ranged combat before the Burgundians could complete their adjustments. The Burgundians grew desperate and advanced their command after half their archers fell.



The Burgundians did have some success. Their pikemen reached one of the Stafford's artillery and skewered the crew and the Burgundian knights ran down half the crossbowmen that claimed the lives of their Burgundian archers. These victories were short-lived, as Stafford's second line re-deployed in time for his handgunners to shoot down the Burgundian knights as Stafford's household guard cut through one pike block.

Eager to help Michael the Bald, Cromwell tried to drive off Stafford's skirmishers in the woods, resulting in a bloody repulse. Some of Cromwell's swordsmen did manage to support the Burgundian pikemen as they advanced and entered melee with Stafford's advance guard of bowmen and dismounted knights. They gave as good as they got, losing one stand while eliminating one stand. But despite creating a gap in Stafford's battleline, Stafford had reformed his 2nd battleline in time to deal with any gaps.

End View

Despite significant losses, the Burgundians still had fight left, but Cromwell saw enough and sought terms. Stafford had established a local superiority on the left flank that Cromwell realized would drive off the Burgundians and eventually his own command, while Fauconberg was beginning to get within archery range of the Duke of Suffolk's command. Seeing how the battle would end, Cromwell and his allies conceded.

Thank you again for all who attended. The company was as enjoyable as the game.

Herding Cats: War of the Roses

by Ed (Cromwell)

Cromwell sipped his tea and spoke. "Why am I not Marshal of England? Or Admiral of the Cinque Ports? Well, it all came down to maneuver. We faced the foe across a battlefield two-thirds wood and scrub. But that foe took no advantage of the clear area on which we posted our pike.

In an attempt to push troops into Stafford's flank, Cromwell suffers a reverse in Cyclops Beard. Photo by Mike.



Soon after battle began, it was clear the wily enemy would reposition his forces to overwhelm our right flank. I gave the order to right-face and march, but our right flank could not do so fully before the battle lines met.

The foe sowed confusion in our lines, my troops in the center could barely commit to the fight, and before long it was clear we could not overcome the mass of troops the enemy had skillfully marched into place. So I asked for terms rather than let further bloodshed stain the good English countryside before the same resolution was reached."

"So this is why you're now dubbed 'Cromwell, Lord Arbiter of Lost Cats and Sewers?'"

"Indeed. Now please go on about your lost cat, Fluffy."

Retrospective

In retrospect, Cromwell should have sent a stand of cavalry across the brush to help lock Dan's marching troops in place, reproducing the success of Suffolk (John), who used skirmishers do the same thing on our left to slow Russ' troops. Let no one doubt that Dan's march was elegant and efficiently done: even with fewer pips he would have succeeded.

Apologies to our left flank, which had all the fun of maneuver but little of battle, and Russ, who surely needed trucks to cover all that ground, also to little thrill of battle. And I salute the pike, which did the best he could on a third or half the movement pips he needed.

Burgundy: Sit For A Spell

by Michael the Bald (Mike: Burgundians)

Looking at the images, I believe Cromwell's "right face your command and march" revised order came in the beginning of Turn 3. By then Michael the Bald was pretty pleased with the forward progress of his command, not least of his pike units, and had planned to use Turn 3 to expand his columns and deploy into combat formation.

*Turn 8: Stafford presses forward against Burgundian army still attempting to shake out into a coherent line.
Photo by Mike.*



Besides my inefficient ("horrendous" is a better term in my opinion) pip-die rolling, my efforts to right face and march and eventually left face and deploy in the face of the enemy, I had to deal with two-thirds of my light troop screen routed by Stafford's archers and crossbows.

These fleeing troops were now in the midst of my command like two large immobile boulders in a small stream. When combined with poor pip-die rolling, it had all sorts of consequences: Disbursement of my units (and thus higher pip-requirements); Inability to timely rally routing units; My pike units poorly screened; My artillery joining battle very late into the game; And I can probably come up with some more excuses if I work hard at it.

No need for that. I enjoyed that game. It was different and challenging, not least because none of our commands were "woody" on a table cluttered with rough and difficult terrain. My command with mounted and dismounted knights, pikes, and artillery, the least, but Ed's and John's not a lot better.

Understanding Support

A personal take-away from the game: I have gamed the *DBWR* rules and organized my commands under the flawed impression that the "same grade/weapon" condition for the "supporting 2nd rank" shooting modifier also applied to SK. Perhaps because I may have interpreted the "foot" in the SK(O) provision in the Appendix "Description of Troop Types" as "heavier than skirmisher."

I almost filed a protest on behalf of Cromwell when I noticed that Stafford's SK(O) provided rear support for the SK(S) in the woods, but I decided I better reread the rules before doing so. And I am happy I did! I totally agree with how the rules actually reads, and my Burgundian and French commands will in the near future be recruiting some SK(O). Thanks again, all.

End of game: Turn 13. Photo by Mike.



Space Base Binge: Eurogaming

Binge Base I: *Space Base* Quartet

by Dan

This is our second gaming session of *Space Base* using the *Shy Pluto* expansion "saga." The first session added some new "Discovery cards" (ie: ship cards that can be purchased to add to your commercial fleet and deployed), but we did not trigger the next part of the storyline.

This time we managed to trigger several parts of the storyline over four games. As we ended the night, the next storyline was a fitting cliffhanger as *Shy Pluto* was revealed to come alive as a being called World Eater.

The additional new Discovery cards introduced several new mechanics and dice. These did add some time to the game as we took the time to understand how they work -- and more time figuring out how or whether to use them in our strategies.

As we are following the expansion saga, the storyline instructs us to add all the newly revealed Discovery cards to the existing set in future games, but I could see the possibility of culling some cards prior to a normal *Space Base* game with other players to speed up the game.

In the meantime, we'll follow the storyline and see how it develops and ends, as there are plenty of unopened boxes to be opened when the storyline instructs us to do so.



Binge Base II: *Space Base* Highlights

by Russ Lockwood

Space Base remains an entertaining combo of cards and dice with relatively straightforward mechanics, but an almost infinite array of replays as outcomes depend on the random draw of cards, which player purchases them, and the die rolls to generate cash or activate cards. Like many card games, the combos you select and buy contribute to your strategy, but the die rolls often determine success or failure. And in this game, you profit from your opponents' die rolls, and they off of yours.

A victory chuckle for Russ.

Photo by Dan.

The 35 Gold Card

By dint of card combos and die rolls, I amassed a horde that just got me to 35 gold, so I could buy this special Level 3 card. Consider that most Level 1 cards cost 2 to 5 gold, Level 2 in the 7 to 9 gold range, and Level 3 in the 12 to 14 gold range, a 35-gold card is something special.

When triggered, it gives you all the gold and actions of the other 11 base cards. That cranked up the gold and victory point totals. By dint of other supporting cards, I managed to trigger it twice and ran away with the win.

Two other games Dan won fairly handily, but that brings me to the best *Space Base* game ever.





Dan's You Win!! Boards from 1 to 5 and 8 to 12 slots (sorry slots 6 and 7). Slot 3 holds the You Win card.

The You Win!!! Game

I was cranking along, generating gold, VPs, and a sizeable lead over Dan. But Dan had bought a special Level 3 Card that I call the "You Win!!!" card because its action, when triggered, is that the player automatically wins the game.

The key here is that you need to power it up with five actions in order to activate it and it starts life in the 12 slot -- i.e. you need a die roll of 12 (boxcars) to power it once. Long odds, indeed.

Yet Dan was clever enough to amass a supporting line up of cards that could swap positions, and the You Win!!! card dutifully swapped down into the single digit slots.

So, I watched Dan start to power it a second and third time, in part thanks to my own rolls of 12 that gave Dan some needed gold and power ups for other cards. Meanwhile, I finally managed to put myself over the 40 VP total I needed to win -- 43 VPs to be precise.

Yet I had gone first in the game and so Dan had one last die roll to try and exceed 43 VPs. He then managed to roll well enough to start this cascade of actions from other cards that granted him a fourth power up of his You Win!!! card and then, to my utter amazement, generated a fifth power up of his card -- triggering the You Win!!! action.

"So, it's a tie?" I asked, and then quickly mused that maybe the card activation win trumps a VP win.

"I don't know. Let me look it up," Dan responded, and we eagerly heard him read the rule for the card.

Sure enough, the You Win!!! card beats all other victories.

It was unexpected. It was clever. It was magnificent! Man, we laughed and hooted at his victory.

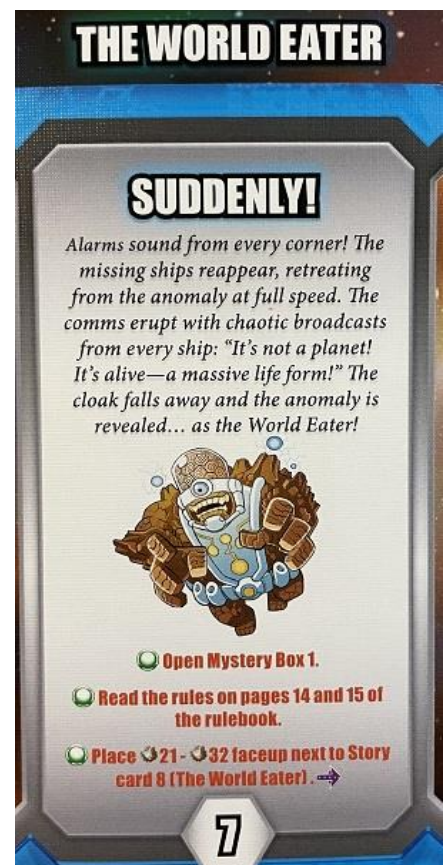
I couldn't help myself and said, "Best *Space Base* game ever."

You Win!!! *Space Base* Victory

by Dan

I believe this was the second game where I acquired the four "bonus roll" ships.

I picked up U.E.S Zudov relatively early to try to move a good reward card to a single-digit slot. I saw the "You Win" card, but didn't get it until I



purchased U.E.S Collins and figured out that I had a reasonable chance to manipulate these cards to get the "You Win" card from the 12 slot to the 3 slot since that's where U.E.S. Zudov had been swapped to earlier.

The challenging difficulty of the "You Win" card was mitigated by two cards: The U.E.S Zudov that lets you swap its slot with another and U.E.S Collins, which allows you to place an Energy Cube anywhere AND move another Energy Cube on another card anywhere.

On the turn Russ reached 40+ VPs, I got a fortunate roll that allowed me to place an Energy cube on the "You Win" card and activate U.E.S. Collins to move an Energy cube off U.E.S Zudov and place it on the "You Win" card to steal the victory from Russ.

The "Bonus Roll" ships were interesting, but I'm not convinced that these are "must-have" cards. Gaining them for free as part of the Shy Pluto storyline was great, but I don't know if I would purchase them in future games.

Space Base: Grace Under Pressure

by Russ Lockwood

After the War of the Roses miniatures game, Dan, Ed, John, and me sat down for a game of *Space Base*. You're probably tired of hearing about it via the AAR by now, but it's still a fascinating game and we haven't managed to break it yet. Sure, we try out new strategies, but the card draws and the die rolls make this an unpredictable game with tremendous replay value. No story to it, just eurogame mechanics.

From medieval nobility to far future nobility (l to r): Ed, Dan, and John ponder their boards and cards.



As for strategies, the initial decision is whether to go low or go high. The low cards on the 1 through 6 slots will naturally come up far more than the high cards on the 7 through 12 slots. The more players you have, in this case four, the more times the opponents will roll to give you resources, in this case, three to one. That said, the resources are smaller for opponents' rolls than your own.

We used the "Light Speed" set up, with 15 gold to buy up to five Level 1 cards and one Level 2 card.

I tried the high-card strategy and was mildly successful at first, but soon hit a dry spell where we all rolled low. It was long enough to slow my money-making machine, although I invested in some gimmick cards -- for example, power up for a Level 3 card -- that worked occasionally.

Mid game (l to r): John, Ed, Russ. Photo by Dan.



Meanwhile, Dan had spent the 35 gold for the "Get all resources from all slots" and powered it up. When that activated, whoosh, he catapulted into first place.

I managed to get the "Swap your cards in the # 1 and # 12 slots" in the 9 slot. My 12 card was a big 9 victory points. As you can figure out, 1s come out more often on a 2d6 roll than boxcars, so I hoped to be bop my way to 9 VPs for each 1 rolled. Alas, I needed two power ups to activate the swap card and only managed to roll a 9 once in almost all of the back half of the game. When I finally did get that second 9 and swapped, it was too late. Dan had run away with the win with a massive 53 VPs. I ended with 36, Ed 34, and John 20.

Still an interesting game with a mix of luck (card draws), skill (buy cards as part of your strategy), and more luck (2d6 rolls).

Blitzkrieg Stalled: Arras Counterattack 1940

by Russ Lockwood

Dan had obtained *Blitzkrieg Stalled*, a 2002 hex boardgame game designed by Paul Rohrbaugh, as part of a game swap. With an 11x17-inch map, one-sided counters, and only eight pages of rules, he wanted to give it a try. Each hex equals 1 mile and each turn is about 2 hours. I agreed.

By random die roll, I was the Allies (French and British) and Dan was the Germans. The Germans set up first, the Allies second. In broad terms, capturing villages and entry hexes and destroying ground units (units are battalions except for British heavy tank companies) provide the VPs. The Luftwaffe outnumber the Allies four counters to two and these are used primarily for bombardment, with air interceptions possible. The Germans can also use one or two counters as generic air interdiction which slows down Allied movement. Random events are rolled each turn.

Basically the 7th Panzer sets up on one side of the road and the Totenkopf sets up on the other side. The French set up near the road and the British farther away.

German counters.

Infantry possess only 2 Movement Points (MPs) and thus can go only two hexes. Most

of them come with transport that ups their MPs to 4. Tanks possess three or four MPs except for the Heavy British tanks with only 2 MPs. Armored cars have 5 MPs. Hard ZOCs end movement. Leaving a ZOC costs 1 additional MP.

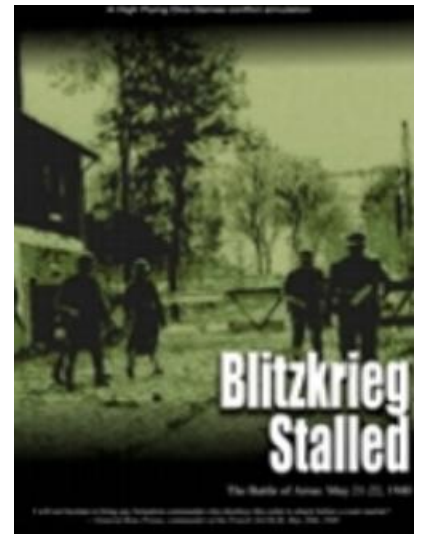
Of note, each side gets a mechanized movement phase (1/2 MPs) after combat for armored and transport-mounted units.

Allied Attack

With the British on my right and the French on the left, I had a long way to go to engage the Totenkopf and reach the VP hex on the other side of the map. When you move only 2 hexes normally and one hex in mechanized movement, it really is slow to go the 15 or so hexes -- five turns even if no German troops are around.

First turn.

The Totenkopf units withdrew in the beginning, knowing they had little chance in a 1-on-1 fight against British armor (one column shift on the Combat Results Table).



If Bren carrier-mounted infantry can join in and make it a "combined arms" attack (one more column shift on the CRT), the Totenkopf boys are in trouble.

Turn 4. The British (tan counters) try to catch Totenkopf, but are too slow.

Meanwhile, on the other flank, the French pushed ahead, taking the fight to the Germans...until I made a dumb mistake and left an open hex on the edge of the map. The Germans were quick to surround that stack, bombard it into Disrupted (one column shift), and force a retreat that ended up eliminating the stack. Three French tank battalions gone in an instant. Dumb.

The Germans pulled back in the mechanized movement phase, leaving the Allies a regiment poorer.

Defensive Artillery

In short, there is no Defensive Artillery fire -- even if an artillery unit didn't move. In this game, artillery cannot move and fire. As the French had a pair of artillery units with only a three-hex range, we quickly figured out they had to be in the front line to have a chance of targeting the Germans after the Germans pull back.

A question about artillery movement and shooting came up and we think we played it correct. A query to the rules author got answers about not being able to move and shoot or shoot and move (the German and Allied turn sequence are slightly different by design and it makes a big difference in play).

We played it correctly. The thing that threw us was that the Artillery phases were in different parts of the sequence of play for Allies than Germans. So this got us thinking that artillery use may be different as well.

Basically, the Germans can see the results of bombardment and then move to attack. The Allies move to attack and then see the results of bombardment. Subtle, but it's a clean mechanic to differentiate faster German command decisions.

Air Mechanics

Nice and simple: Place any air unit for bombardment. Enemy air may intercept. Roll on a CRT.

Surviving air units roll on a CRT for effect, from being shot down (skip the next two turns) to Disrupt the enemy unit. You roll for each unit in a stack.

We called the game on Turn 10. Allies lost 10 units and the Germans lost two units. In addition, the Allies lost four Bren carrier units and the Germans lost seven halftrack units.

I will say the German player tossed an awful lot of 1s during air bombardments. As the Allied player, I was rather giddy about the idea (even if the planes came back two turns later) of



Both: Bombardment

** If an artillery unit bombards, it doesn't move in either regular movement or mechanized movement. Is this correct?*

See rule 8.1. Artillery that move, cannot bombard. As bombardment combat comes after movement. Per the rule, however, artillery that is transported can move in the exploitation movement phase fired or not.

Note that the Allies move before bombardment, hence the question. -- RL

Both: Combat support

** If an artillery unit moves in regular movement, it cannot support an attack with its combat factors. Is this correct?*

That is precisely what rule 8.1 states.

** If an artillery unit supports an attack with its combat factors, and is stacked with a halftrack/truck/Bren Carrier, it may move in mechanized movement. Is this correct?*

Again, that is precisely what rule 8.1 states.

A Design Question...

** The rules clearly state that artillery never supports defense. Was there something about artillery practices in 1940 that precluded that? Is it a time per turn decision? We're trying to figure out the usefulness for the French arty (3-hex range). The Germans quickly learned to pull back 2 hexes after any attack, so the French 3-hex range artillery has to be in the "front line" (and undisrupted) to do any bombardment. And if the French artillery moves, it cannot fire to add combat factors.*

Defensive artillery fire support was not very good in the new "blitzkrieg" style of warfare for either side. The Germans relied primarily upon the Luftwaffe's ground support for this, not artillery. The French and British never had the opportunity to adapt and develop during this very short campaign (they would get better at it in North Africa, but that is another story).

One Important Change From Oct 2021 Errata:

9.5 Disruption (correction): Disregard the reference that disrupted units have their CF halved.

This wasn't really a factor in our game, but is good to know.

Bottom Line

We did eight turns of a 20-turn game in about 2.5 hours. We decided to call it as I had made another dumb mistake (there goes another disrupted regiment of armor), but there was maneuvering left. This time included looking up rules and discussing them. Figure about four hours or so if players are familiar with the rules.

The German key is disruption, Rommel, and combined arms against the few Allied infantry units. Indeed, they were a target. Dan being a skillful German player, he was able to pick off the Allied stacks by attacking and fading back outside of bombardment range. Too late did I learn to layer a tank with an infantry unit to at least avoid that column shift.

It's a clever little game that hits the main aspects of the battle. The Rommel unit moves a little fast for our taste ("teleport" from any hex to any hex with a German unit...but representing that he was seemingly everywhere during the tactical battle), but the British armor is appropriately slow. Given that the unit represents a company and the other units battalions, their combat factors and a shift bonus (attack only) seem appropriate.

This game is part of a series of six small battles that generally use the same basic series rules, with a few game-specific rules added. It's definitely worth another play, hopefully without my bone-headed errors to make it a closer game.

Romanitas: Vae Victis Issue 173

by Russ Lockwood

Conventional wisdom says imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. If so, *Romanitas* flatters the *Against the Odds* magazine's game *Rome Inc.*, an award-winning resource-shifting solitaire game that covers Imperial Rome from Augustus to Diocletian (284 AD). As emperor, you face myriad threats that require some smarts and some luck. *Romanitas* covers much of the same ground, but from 528 AD to 628 AD, albeit in a streamlined format.

You play the Eastern Emperor and face myriad threats, but much of what you can do heavily depends on dice rolls -- especially the barbarian invasion d6 roll.

3d6 Fate

First you roll 3d6 and assign the rolls as you wish to the political, religious, and economic tracks. High die rolls are best, low worst. The roll determines the amount of resources, free troops, and support (or lack thereof) you receive as Emperor.

My initial roll of 5 - 3 - 3 wasn't too bad. I used the 5 for the economy and rolled up some Roman Points (RPs -- or Resource Points is you step out of the period simulation) and the 3s for the others. Small detriments, but overall a stable empire.

Barbarian Fate

The next die roll is the most important. Roll low and you get a turn to shore up finances and perhaps take back some of the barbarian territory or the Western Empire territory. Roll high and barbarian raids (three enemy units) and invasions (six enemy units) storm the frontiers.

Worse, the roll is modified by +1 for each warring barbarian nation/tribe. It's relatively easy for chaos to descend upon your borders. The Persians start to encroach on a modified die roll of 3+, many are triggered at 5+, and a few need a higher total. Roll a 6 on the first roll and watch the empire disintegrate as combat takes its toll of good Roman units and the B-teamers get swept away.

The Magister confronts a Persian raid. The small red bows means the unit is capable of missile fire. The Defensive stratagem is assigned to the Empire. The Manoeuvre will be assigned to the Persians.

Combat

You place units on a small tactical board of three boxes: left, center, and right. Barbarians are drawn and placed randomly. You get to place your units as you see fit. Of course, the good units cost RPs. That's why strong support from the 3d6 fate roll is important.

Basic units are free, so you'll always have five units and a leader (Count of something) to defend a location. How they do depends on the die rolls, which are opposed d6 + combat factor +



stratagem pluses/minuses. Units rout from the battle or are eliminated from the game.

One key is that units can get constantly recycled. Spend the RPs and new (or routed) units report for duty. As each turn represents 10 years, so this represents constant conscription or recruitment. The ones you already paid for are available in subsequent turns until routed or eliminated. The two leaders provide combat die modifier bonuses (+1) and an army limit -- the Count (free and commands 3 units) and the Magister (costs 1 RP and commands six units) and both (up to nine units).

A field battle requires a total of 6 or more during the shooting phase to rout an enemy unit and a total from 1 to 3 higher than the enemy routs the enemy and 4+ difference eliminates the enemy. A "siege" battle on a fortified location or city requires 7+ to hit in shooting and the attackers suffer a -1 die modifier for combat in trying to storm the walls.

A basic defensive stratagem is free with the garrison troops, but others (siege, ambush, harassment, etc.) cost 1 RP.

Diplomacy

Three types: Missionary, Marriage, and Ambassador need particular die rolls to succeed, which turn enemy barbarian nations (tribes) into allies, or at least neutrals. Most cost 1 RP, but you can get some freebies from a good fate roll.

Game Play

The challenge is managing your RPs. Dice are dice in combat, but you can jiggle the odds with a RP here and an RP there. As each territory captured by barbarians subtracts 1 RP at the start of the turn, if you lose too many, you'll be fighting with the B team and a 50-50 losing proposition.

At start.

As the counters keep getting recycled, after a few turns, the battles start looking the same. For example, the Vandals have four land counters and one ship counter. If you drive to retake Carthage, and the subsequent mandatory Vandal efforts to reconquer lost locations, you'll see the same fellows. It gets a bit repetitive, sort of like Whack - a - Vandal.

The idea is to keep the Roman RPs flowing so that at the end of 10 turns, you have 6-8 RPs (major victory) or 9-10 RPs (historical victory and presumably a super-major victory). Anything less is a defeat of escalating magnitude.

Spreadsheet Eurogame

Solitaire games are the toughest to design because players do battle against a system. If clever enough, the mechanics hide the if-then functions. The initial challenge is to keep track of all the +1 modifiers here and -1 modifiers there that occurs at various points of die rolling. So, *Romanitas* is very much a resource counting game, or as I call it, a spreadsheet game.

I had a number of questions that we e-mailed off to VV and the answers came promptly. Most of what we asked we had figured out during play and asked for confirmation's sake. Some mechanics we found out we did wrong.

For example, the barbarian nation/tribes status roll was a single d6 applied to each nation/tribe. We incorrectly rolled each nation/tribe separately.

In combat, we picked the stratagem -- I mean, we paid a RP for it, we're clever commanders, and thus we should choose it. Nope. Random draw. You can have a maximum of two.



We also thought the stratagems were only for the Romans. Nope. The barbarians get one (random) one.

With Breakthrough combat, we added the combat modifier of the flankers to the frontal attackers. Nope. It's actually two rolls, one from the flankers and one from the frontal units. It is possible for the defenders to rout/eliminate both attacking stacks.

We thought defeating a raid or invasion automatically turned the barbarian nation/tribe back into neutrals. Nope. Only diplomacy can end war with a barbarian nation/tribe.

With my limited playing, I can start to see the pressures against the Roman Empire and the opportunities to recapture the Western Empire and make it one big happy empire again.

Yet the 3d6 fate dice and especially the d6 barbarian nation/tribes status roll are far more important than whatever you think you're going to do. In one opening, Dennis rolled three sixes on his 3d6 Fate dice and was off to the RP races and reconquest. Had he rolled the reverse, three 1s, he might not have had more than 1 or 2 RPs at start, and if you *begin* a turn with 0 RPs, you automatically lose.

We did receive the Example of Play (EoP) in French and ran it through Google translate. The EoP helped, even if we scratched our heads to decipher some of the shorthand used to describe a turn.

It's a decent solitaire system with a wide variety of effects based on a variety of die rolls. After a while, it does become repetitious, but then again, I'm not much into spreadsheets and prefer to push troops across a table or hex grid. I get the layered approach of interlocking aspects, but I'm more of an *Axis and Allies* fan of conquer countries, get dollars, and figure out how much to spend on what type of troops to push my offensive or defensive agenda. *Romanitas* requires a bit more calculations, remembering various modifiers, and is much more subject to the whims of fate.

How much you like resource eurogames will determine how much you like *Romanitas*.

NEWS

NASA RPG: Hubble Telescope MIA

by Russ Lockwood (adapted from press release)

You gotta root for the gaming nerds at NASA -- someone received permission to create and release an official, NASA-stamped role playing game adventure module called *The Lost Universe*. From the press release:

A dark mystery has settled over the city of Aldastron on the rogue planet of Exlaris. Researchers dedicated to studying the cosmos have disappeared, and the Hubble Space Telescope has vanished from Earth's timeline. Only an ambitious crew of adventurers can uncover what was lost. Are you up to the challenge?

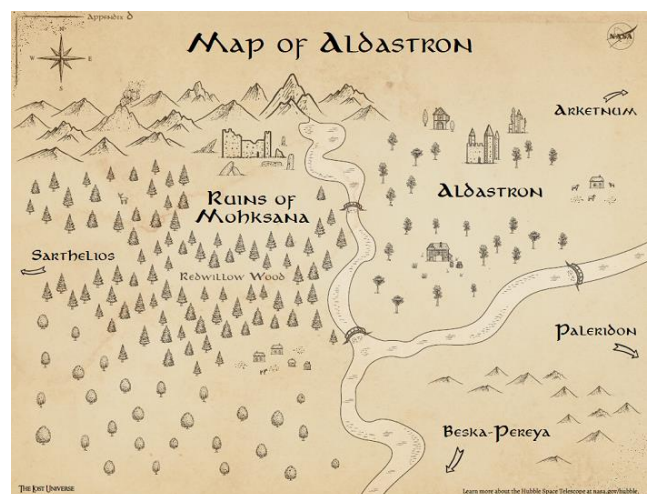
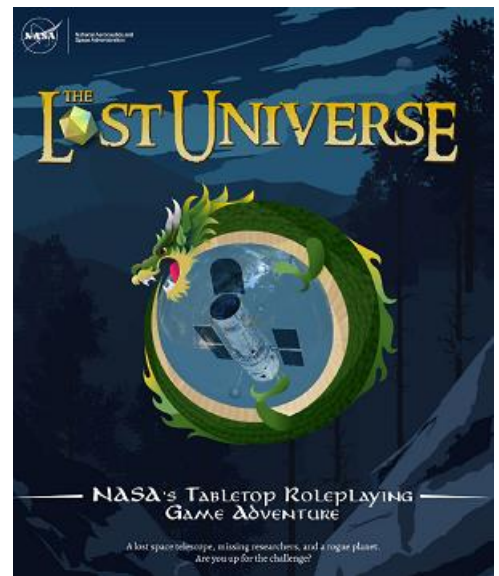
This adventure is designed for a party of 4-7 level 7-10 characters and is easily adaptable for your preferred tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG) system.

It's available as a free download from the NASA website, with one PDF file the module and a second PDF file the map of Aldastron, the garden spot of a planet called Exlaris.

The adventure opens with the players, mission specialists all, suddenly awakening on Exlaris, where they meet orcs, elves, and others. The module is like any other, explaining the locations, offering hints to the GMs on playing NPCs, and unfolding the adventure.

The link:

<https://science.nasa.gov/mission/hubble/multimedia/online-activities/the-lost-universe/>



LeeCon II: NJ Game Day - May 18, 2024

by Russ Lockwood

After the success of the first LeeCon in 2023, OMM is hosting another -- LeeCon II NJ Game Day and Wargame Flea Market is tentatively scheduled for May 18, 2024.

It's at the same place: the Community Center was in Whiting (Manchester) NJ. I did a quick Google Maps query. It is 48 miles from Philadelphia (via NJ Rte 70), 50 miles from Atlantic City, NJ, and 80 miles from Morristown, NJ.

The address is 92 Fairway Lane, Whiting, NJ 08759. If using GPS, this comes up as Manchester NJ.

Contact: Dennis Shorthouse (OMM) for GM and other information. E-mail: militarymatters@att.net

New Wargame: The 1941 US Army Maneuvers

by Russ Lockwood

Adapted from press release.

Maneuvering to War simulates the US Army Maneuvers in Louisiana, August 16, 1941. After initiating the first peacetime draft in US history that same year, despite strenuous and heated debate and a very strong and wide-spread isolationist sentiment, Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall ordered the large-scale military maneuvers to test the new recruits, their weaponry, and their tactics.

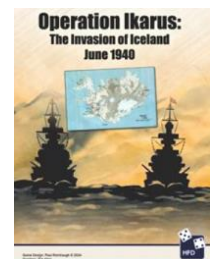
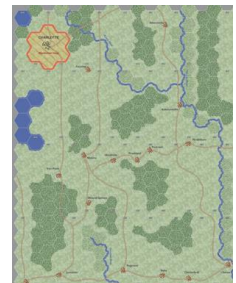
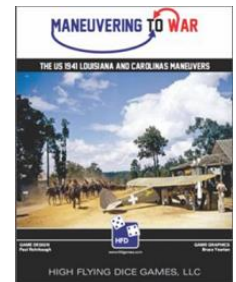
Contains: six 11x17-inch map sections, 338 single-sided un-mounted counters, one players aid sheet, and 16 pages of rules.

Combat units are mostly regiments, brigades or their equivalent sized battle groups. Exception: A Paratrooper unit represents two platoons (Louisiana) or one company (Carolinas), and an AT unit represents a reinforced battalion. Each turn of the game represents 8 hours of time. Each hex on the Louisiana map is approximately 5.5 miles across;

approximately 4 miles across on the Carolinas map.

Cost is \$31.95 plus shipping. Mounted counters can be purchased for an additional \$8.00. A box for the game can be purchased for an additional \$6.00. Designed by Paul Rohrbaugh and graphics by Bruce Yearian.

Info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/maneuvers.html>



New Wargame: 1940 Invasion of Iceland

by Russ Lockwood

Adapted from press release.

Operation Ikarus: The Invasion of Iceland, June 1940 is a what-if game. Historically, the severe losses sustained by Germany's Kriegsmarine with the invasion of Norway, and Hitler's desire to compel Great Britain to come to terms with Nazi Germany, were significant factors that made such an invasion unlikely.

In this what-if, Operation Ikarus is given much higher priority over the preparations for Operation Sealion, the invasion of Great Britain -- the latter becomes a diversion and feint intended to keep the Royal Navy's and Air Force's full attention.

Contains: One 11x17-inch map sheet, two sheets of 160 un-mounted double-sided counters, one players aid sheet, and 16 pages of rules.

Each turn represents six hours of time (game is 12 turns long). A hex is about 6 kilometers across on the Akureyri map, about 10 kilometers on the Reykjavik map. Infantry units are battalions and tank units represent companies. You need to supply a deck of standard playing cards.

Cost is \$22.95 plus shipping. Mounted counters can be purchased for an additional \$8.00. A custom card set can be purchased for an additional \$11.00. Designed by Paul Rohrbaugh and graphics by Tim Allen

More info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/ikarus.html>



Fall In 2023: Show Report

by Scott Landis, Fall In 2023 Convention Director

Fall In! 2023 is over and I wanted to provide a brief overview of the convention results to allow everyone to understand some of the details that each convention director considers before, during and after each convention.

I want to thank each and every Attendee, Game Master, Wally's Basement Dweller, Vendor, Hobby U Artist/Instructor, War College Lecturer, our heroic volunteer Staff and our fantastic support network of friends and family that help us make our hobby, businesses, and conventions possible. Thank you everyone!

By The Numbers

* Total Attendees: 1724* (this number is a bit lower than our initial estimates due to cancellations, and duplicate entries)

* Total Spouse/Children: 72/96

* Total Number of Games: 332 (does not include Vendor Demo Games)

* Thursday Events: 16 Games, 1 Tournament

* Friday Events: 156 Games, 7 Tournaments, 18 Hobby University classes, 7 War College lectures, Toys4Tots Raffle

* Saturday Events: 150 Games, 13 Tournaments, 18 Hobby University classes, 9 War College lectures, Toys4Tots Raffle/Auction

* Sunday Gaming Events: 12 Games

* Average Fill Rate of Games held: 82.1%

* Total Number of Game Masters: 203

* Total Number of Tournaments: 23

* Total Number of Exhibitors: 48

* Total Number of War College Presentations/Attendance: 14/201

* Total Number of Hobby U. classes/Attendance: 36/161

* Hobby U Paint and Take Attendance: 30 (prior 25) +18 homeschoolers & Parents

Special Notes: 10 Walk up games all weekend, 59 Kid Friendly games, and 66 Beginner Friendly games



HMGS Convention Awards Program

The HMGS Convention Awards Program is a continuing effort to recognize those Game Masters that go "Above and Beyond" to present outstanding and entertaining games for all of us to enjoy. The program is supported by volunteer judges to find games that best represent the artistry and fun of our hobby.

Games are selected during major game slots (Morning, Afternoon, Evening) each day of the convention as well as games that represent special aspects of the hobby including Kids Games, Best of Theme (Fall In! 2023 theme was America: Rise to World Power, 1898 to Present) as well as the overall Best of Show and Best of Terrain. Each award recipient receives a voucher that can be used in the Vendor Hall or for food during the Convention. Congratulations to each of our award winners and thanks to all of our volunteer judges.

Best Of Theme:

* Brazen Chariots - A Philippine Islands Battle Series by Adam Wine and Nows

* Battle of Damortis; Battle of Gerona; the 2nd Battle of Gerona; Battle of San Ramon

Best Of Show:

* 55 Days at Peking by Gordon Andrews and friends ('5 guys and a lawyer')

Best Of Terrain:

* Brazen Chariots - A Philippine Islands Battle Series by Adam Wine and Nows

Pour Encourager Les Autres (PELA) Award Winners:

- * Battle of Nyezane River, January 22, 1879 by Tom Uhl and DelVal Gamers
- * Defense of Magee Hamlet by Charles Sherrange and Gaming Assoc. of SW PA
- * All Quiet on the Martian Front by David Hill
- * Hail of Fire! Panzer Attack at Montain, August 7, 1944 by Robert Schaible
- * Feeling out the Sky, 1916 by Pete Landry
- * The Grande Forage, 1778 by James McGaughey
- * 55 Days at Peking by Gordon Andrews and friends ('5 Guys and a Lawyer')
- * Brazen Chariots: Battle of Gerona, Philippines by Adam Wine and Nows
- * Philadelphia Freedom by Graydon Vanry
- * The Streets of Minas Tirith by Tyler McCalmon
- * Afghanistan 2011 by Martyn Kelly and WAMP
- * Gnome Wars – The Last Trench in Tollymore Forest by Jim Stanton and HMGS NextGen

The GM Award Judging Teams are veteran GM's and previous award winners, all of whom devote their personal convention time as volunteers. Note: we are always recruiting Awards judges, this year we welcomed several new judges to our ranks.

GM Award Judges for Fall In 2023 included: Mike Bassett, Annemarie D'Amato, Steve Boegemann, Cliff Brunken, Matthew Fridirici, Eric Jacobson, Maia Jacobson, Martyn Kelly, Russ Lockwood, Jon Lundberg, James McGaughey, James McWee, Frank Preziosa, Michelle Preziosa, Jason Roshon, Bill Rutherford, Joe Swartz, Tom Uhl, Stephen Wagner.

HMGS Legion of Honor Battle Stars:

A "Recognition Award" selected for achievement by members of the HMGS Legion of Honor. Bill Rutherford and Frank Preziosa presented these Legion of Honor Battle Star recognitions.

- * Dreadnaughts at War by Kim Young
- * Hold the Second Line by John Currin and Z-team

Tournaments

The HMGS Tournament Program spans all periods past, present and future and involves a dedicated crew of gamers and volunteers to engage folks throughout the convention. There were over 18 Tournaments run throughout the course of the weekend.

Art de La Guerre

15mm Theme, 20 players, 3 games
1st: Dennis Shorthouse, Ancient Bedouin
2nd: Jeff Herzon, Hittite
3rd: Duncan Richards, Ancient Bedouin

25mm Theme, 20 players, 3 games
1st: Mike Kelley, Assyrian
2nd: Mike Kennedy, Achaemenid Persian
3rd: Jay Stone, Assyrian

ADLG also had 7 players in other events with 10 more games run.

DBM 3.2

25mm Open, 8 players, 1-5 games
1st: Wayne Carter
2nd: Tony Zallnick

Warrior

Mini-Open, 8 players, 3 games

1st: Matt Kollmer, Zulu
2nd: Todd Kaeser, Viking

Open, 8 players, 3 games
1st: Bill Low, Granadine
2nd: Rich Kroupa, Hussite

Triumph

15mm Classical Tournament
Fantasy Triumph - 15mm Open Tournament
Triumph - 15mm Open Tournament

Bolt Action

Bad Day At War: Steve B
Best Minor Power: Jacob K
Best Allied Power: Mike K
Best Axis Power: Todd N

Epic Armageddon

14 players, 20+ games over 3 rounds.
1st: Jon P

Heavy Gear

8 players, 3 rounds
1st: Preston Jacka, Nucol
2nd: Alex Schleicher, Caprice
3rd: Mark Hiller, SRA Tank

Other Tournaments

World of Tanks (Battlefront)
Flames of War (Battlefront)
Middle Earth Strategy Battle Game
Wargods
Epic Armageddon Events
Warhammer 40K
Blood Bowl
Warmaster Revolution Events
Blood & Plunder Events

Vendor Hall

HMGS is proud to offer such a wide variety of almost 50 different Vendors providing everything you need to make your gaming possible from figures, terrain, paints, brushes, dice, tools, rules to game every period in every scale. We continue to see a variety of new and returning Vendors that are constantly working to bring you the best the Hobby has to offer. The Vendors help to make our conventions possible, and your support to them keeps them coming back to our shows.

This year the Vendor Hall also featured a Podcast by Lead Pursuit that included a live walk-up Aerial Wargame as well as interviews with players, attendees and HMGS Staff. We hope to continue bringing Little Wars TV, Lead Pursuit, and other Blogs and Online groups to our future conventions.

Hobby University

The Hobby University program continued its outstanding program of teaching a broad palate of over 30 classes focused on the artistic side of our hobby from making complex buildings and terrain, to making and

assembling figures and models, 3D printing fundamentals, airbrushing techniques, to the finer points of painting detailed miniatures of all sizes.

Hobby University class Attendance: 100

Paint and Take Attendance: 25

The Hobby U folks hosted almost 20 homeschool kids and their parents in an impromptu Paint and Take activity that really showed their expertise in teaching not just new hobbyists but many kids that had never even tried painting before, it was truly a FUNdamental course (sorry for the pun, but the kids and parents had a blast).

Here is a sample of just some of the Hobby U classes:

Terrain: Barbed Wire, Total Rubbish, Gearing up for Gaslands, Farm/Old West Buildings. Gardens

Painting: Weathering, Paint Color Fundamentals, Shields, Skin & Faces, Speed/Army Painting, Painting a Starscape, Air Brush techniques and Painting Instruction for all levels of experience

Introduction classes on 3D Printing, Painting and Airbrushing, kitbashing and painting figures/models

Hobby U. would like to thank the following companies that made donations to the University for Fall In projects:

Michigan Toy Soldier

Reaper Miniatures

The Wargaming Company

War College

HMGS' Institute of Higher Learning, our War College provides some of the best in Military History from ancient to modern time periods. Our lectures are from a wide variety of distinguished speakers, game masters, historians, authors, and even tales from some who were actually there. With 14 different lectures on an array of topics, the War College should be added to your next convention wish list.

HMGS Next Gen

This year the Next Gen program took on a new challenge at Fall In! 2023 with the introduction of over 30 Homeschool kids (ages 5-14) and their parents that came from in and around the Lancaster area to experience their first Wargame Convention. It was total chaos and tons of fun for everyone and another example of the tremendous skills of the Next Gen Team. After the Homeschool kids had a pizza lunch and scurried off to Hobby U for some Paint and Take fun, the Next Gen team was back at it running multiple games and events for students and gamers of all ages. Thanks to John Speiss, Jim Stanton, Eric Jacobsen, and many others for all their work.

Miscellaneous Items

Toys for Tots: The Wednesday Night Painting Group (WNPG) folks raised \$6,498 and a half of a box of toys during Fall In. The following week WNPG held a Cyber auction and brought in another \$2,520. WNPG raised over \$9,000 for Toys for Tots with the help of HMGS and its members. There were 50 items for both raffles and over 40 items for the silent auction. All auction items sold. Thanks to all of the Vendors who donated items for the Raffles and those volunteers who built, painted and donated the awesome Hobby items for the auction.

BoardGame Library: This continues to be a popular event for HMGS Conventions as Gamers come and peruse the hundreds of games available for free play and return for another game. Whether you are winding down from a hard day of battling it out in the trenches or looking to kill some time between games, the board game library provides the perfect place to relax and socialize with your friends new and old. This show our regular Game Guy Anthony was not available, so I phoned a friend from Elementary School (who is an amazing Board Gamer and game teacher), who brought in his personal collection of games. There were over 50 games played, and I finally got my Deputy Brenda to play a few games at a convention! We also tried something different with a special "Vampire" Card tournament in the Board game area that was a great success.

Social Media: HMGS finally has someone who is providing show updates and pictures while the convention is going on. The team led by Cat and Stephanie were able to get pictures of tons of games and even took a video of the crowds descending on Wally's Basement. We also had a new Podcast at our Convention (Lead Pursuit) that did livestream games and interviews. We will continue to see this expand in the future.

Convention Director Final Thoughts

I want to thank all of the Fall In volunteer Staff that worked tirelessly before during and after the convention to make this “Gamer’s Convention” a success. I want to also thank the HMGS BoD for having the confidence in our outstanding Convention team to run another convention. We couldn’t have done it without their support. All of us hope that you had a great gaming and convention experience. We continue to collect feedback from folks to help improve all HMGS Conventions in the future.

Speaking of the future we look forward to seeing all of you across the gaming table at Historicon 2024 in July and in early November back at the Wyndham Host for Fall In! 2024. Thank you again everyone and Happy Gaming!



New Wargame: *Cities of the Damned*

By Russ Lockwood

Cities of the Damned features two solitaire WWII games in which the player must lead his Allied forces to victory.

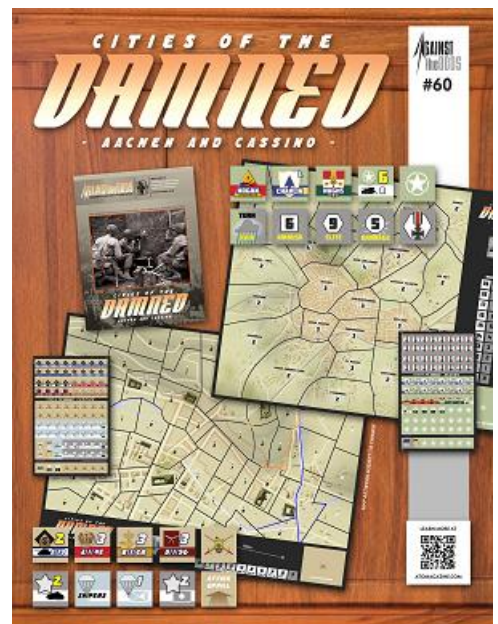
Cassino by Paul Rohrbaugh: In early 1944 the western half of the German “Winter Line” in Italy was anchored by the town of Cassino high up on Monte Cassino, which also featured a centuries old Benedictine Abbey atop the peak.

Aachen by Mike Rinella: Five months later the world would see yet another account of the terrible cost of audacity. Fresh from a string of victories across the length of France, the US Command set its sights capture of the supposedly weakly held German city of Aachen.

Contains: Maps - Two full color 17x22-inch mapsheets; 176 large 5/8-inch die-cut counters; Rules length - 14 pages; Charts and tables - 2 pages; Complexity - Medium; Playing time - Up to 4 hours; Solitaire capability: Excellent

Prices: Ziplock (USA): \$34.95. Ziplock (International): \$47.95. Prices include shipping.

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=180>



Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

The Samurai Castle Master: Warlord Todo Takatora. by Chris Glenn.
Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 270 pages. 2022.

With *Shogun* making a return as TV miniseries, it seems a good time to get better acquainted with the period with a biography of a warlord important enough to generate a biography.

If you heard of the samurai Todo Takatora, you are far ahead of my knowledge base. I guessed that he was probably at the Battle of Sekigahara and I was correct, but this guy was far more than a sword-wielding samurai.

To put it in Western terms, he was the Vauban of Japan, responsible for designing and building a considerable number of Japanese castles with sloping stone walls and pagoda towers. Like Vauban, he also conducted successful sieges of other castles -- albeit from the front-line storming parties.

Descriptions of castles, dimensions, and building techniques all receive detailed treatment. Some period illustrations and blueprints survive and are included in the center image section, but drawings would have been worth tens of thousands of words. The Japanese terms for various components of castle design are translated within the text, although the glossary in the back came in handy.

Todo Takatora became the right-hand man of two successful shoguns, tasked with command in battles and then securing the gains with new or reworked fortifications. He even got to govern areas, although he was more warlord than governor. He had a long and productive life, surviving a plethora of wounds in the ranged and hand-to-hand combat of the era.

One interesting factoid: Battle often began with thrown rocks, with 10% of deaths during Sengoku period recorded as killed by rocks (p10). The other percentages: 41% from arrows, 19% from matchlock guns, 18% from spears, and only 4% from swords. There's no attribution or footnote for these percentages.

For Shogun fans, Japan had about 300,000 Christians in the late 1500s (p78). Shogun starts with five regents in charge, which is true and called Go-Tairo.

Typos: "undercover of darkness" needs a space between under and cover (p26); "deafed" should be defeated (p46); and ",for example" needs a space between the comma and f (p94).

To me, keeping all the Japanese names straight proved difficult due to my lack of familiarity. It is not unlike keeping all the nobles straight in the War of the Roses. That's an observation, not a criticism.

The book contains 27 black and white photos and three black and white illustrations.

Although field battles are mentioned, the focus remains on sieges and fortifications. You'll certainly pick up info about Japanese castles and how long it took to build, rebuild, and siege them -- and the master of how to accomplish much in a short period of time: Todo Takatora.

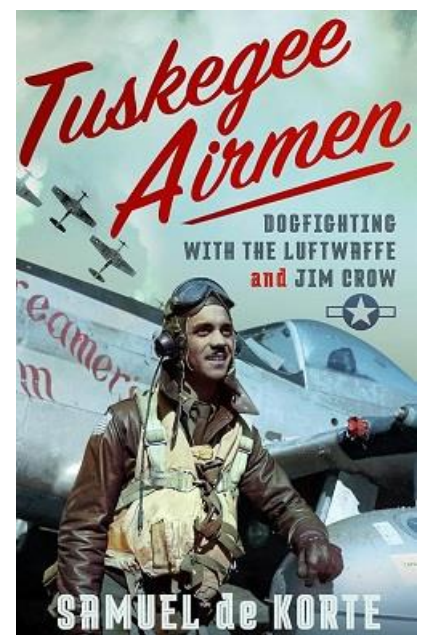
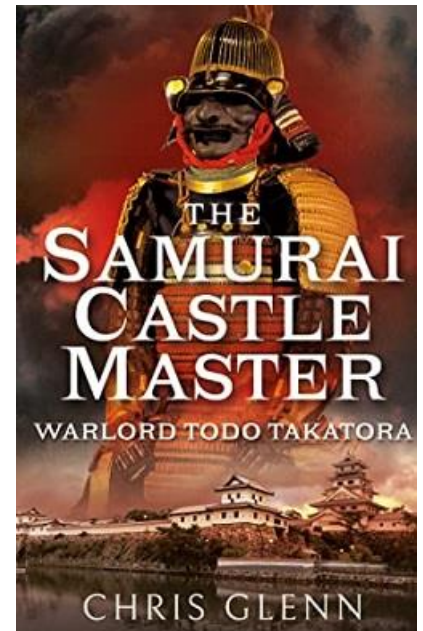
Enjoyed it.

Tuskegee Airmen: Dogfighting Luftwaffe and Jim Crow. by Samuel de Korte. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 198 pages. 2024.

The bulk of the book consists of first-person accounts by Tuskegee fighter pilots and day-by-day summaries of missions, targets, successes, and losses. These are mostly taken from official reports and war diaries and they provide a detailed history of the various Tuskegee fighter squadrons in WWII, with emphasis on the 99th and 332nd.

That's the "dogfighting with the Luftwaffe" part and the combat-heavy accounts read just like any fighter pilot accounts. You can pull many, many air fighting scenarios from the pages. Narrow escapes, heavy flak, and parachuting to safety and sometimes capture are all a part of fighter pilot stories. The daily recaps get a bit repetitious, but the author did his homework.

Some of the combat descriptions are chilling. Some are a little more comical. For example, a maintenance sergeant thought he could pilot a plane. He took off fine and flew OK, but taped a list of step-by-step landing instructions to the instrument panel. Alas, when he opened his canopy, the wind blew the paper



out and he had to wing it -- nose first into the ground. He survived. The plane did not.

A pilot came into land just as a flock of sheep crossed the runway. He plowed through the flock, killing 23 sheep, and survived the crash. Instead of painting a swastika on the plane for shooting down a German plane, his buddies painted a lamb chop.

The "Jim Crow" portion is not so funny and accounts describe the racism the black pilots encountered from most white officers in particular and society in general. FYI: Wikipedia says the earliest known use of the phrase "Jim Crow law" can be dated to 1884 in a newspaper article summarizing congressional debate. The term also appears in 1892 in the title of a New York Times article about Louisiana requiring segregated railroad cars.

As for more overt forms of racism, the initial Momyer Report (p34) was highly critical of the 99th's pilots as being substandard in performance in North Africa. The final report was modified after supporters of the 99th threatened to research and compare the 99th to white squadrons' performance.

The Freeman Field Mutiny occurred because training group commander Col. Robert Selway segregated the black officers from white officers with two different Officers Clubs on base. That is specifically against Army regulations, so the black officers decided to enter the white O Club -- 61 were arrested. Col. Selway demanded that the 400 black officers sign a paper agreeing to the segregation and 101 refused and were brought up on charges. All charges were dismissed except for three who faced court martials for pushing past MPs to get into the white O Club. Two of them were acquitted and the third paid a \$150 fine (p162-164). Other accounts of racism are interspersed within the pages.

The book contains 65 black and white photos, two black and white illustrations, and two black and white maps.

That the pilots' combat accounts read like other pilots' accounts in the air can be considered the point of the book. That they bore racism when they landed is a testament to their perseverance in defense of equal rights often denied them. President Harry S. Truman ended official segregation in the US armed forces on July 25, 1948, but as post-war events showed, a society changes slower than the military.

Enjoyed it.

Armies of the Crimean War: 1853-1856. by Gabriele Esposito. Hardback (7.2x10.0 inches). 197 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *History, Organization & Equipment of the British, French, Turkish, Piedmontese & Russian Forces*

As usual with Esposito books, this one on the Crimean War is exceptionally strong with uniform details and lots of public domain contemporary illustrations and photos. The history of particular units often goes back to the 1700s, which might be a bit too far back, but otherwise you'll get a general description of how many battalions or squadrons per regiment. This rarely offers specific numbers of troops in various units, and almost none for any specific battle. Oddly enough, the Piedmont OOB is the most complete.

Some units, for example, the Russian Imperial Guard, are described even though they never actually participated in Crimean War battles. Or, German mercenaries that the British hired (so to speak) landed in the Crimean but never participated in a battle. These additions are nice for those with tabletop campaign aspirations.

The book contains 114 color uniform illustrations, 19 black and white photos, and seven black and white illustrations.

Typo: "actin instead" needs a "g" at the end of acting (p108).

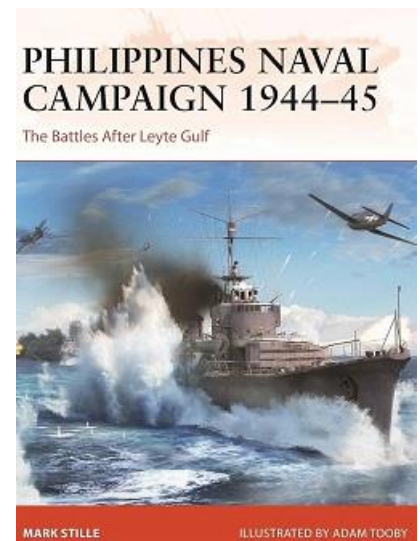
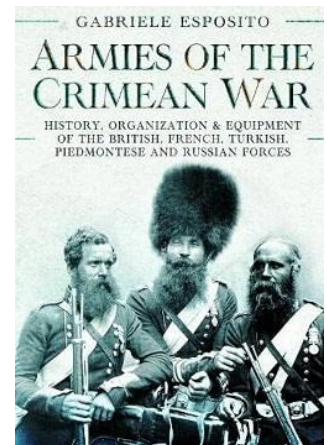
If you are painting up Crimean War armies, this is a marvelous collection of imagery and uniform descriptions of all the major players. If you are going to put on a wargame, you'll need a different book for the units and the number of troops per unit for any particular battle.

Enjoyed it.

Philippines Naval Campaign 1944-45: Campaign 399. by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Battles After Leyte Gulf*

As the subtitle notes, the US and Japanese navies clashed throughout the US offensive to retake the Philippines. The Japanese were significantly outnumbered and outgunned, but on occasion performed adept tactical



maneuvers.

The Japanese decided to fight for Leyte and ran nine TA convoys to the island despite the odds. They were successful in ultimately transferring 45,000 troops and 10,000 tons of supplies (p49), albeit at a fairly high cost due to US airpower and the occasional naval action between destroyers and smaller ships. The Battle of Orloc Bay with three brand new and green-crewed US destroyers against two smaller Japanese destroyers would make for a nice, small tabletop scenario.

As the US closed in on Luzon, the kamikazes began their efforts, sometimes with considerable success in knocking out aircraft carriers and other warships for several months or sinking smaller ships.

Suicide boats equipped with two depth charges make their appearance. The boats would sail close to US ships and drop the depth charge with shallow setting -- 200 boats managed to damage nine ships, but only one was sunk (p85-86). Aircraft kamikazes were more effective.

The book contains 64 black and white photos, one color photo, eight color maps, and three color two-page action illustrations.

A nice, compact summary of getting MacArthur from Leyte to Luzon (plus a tad about Halsey's South China Sea carrier air offensive).

Enjoyed it.

A Prisoner of Stalin. by Christian Huber. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 118 pages. 2022 translation of 2015 book.

Subtitle: *The Chilling Story of a Luftwaffe Pilot Shot Down and Captured on the Eastern Front*

Lt. Gerhard Ehlert flew a DO-217M-1 on night recon missions over Soviet territory just before the opening of Operation Bagration. Mechanical failure, navigator error, and one too many tauntings of a female AA battery ended up with the engines on fire and crashing behind Soviet lines on June 14, 1944. Two crew survived the crash, were captured by villagers and turned over to the Red Army. A few interrogations later, Ehlert was on his way to Yelabuga POW camp.

His POW story is told with flashbacks of his bio and life in pre-war Germany. From his point of view, POW life was repetitious, with little food, much cold, and primitive conditions.

Within a year, the war was over, but the USSR sent him to Bolshoy Bor POW camp. With the war over, the prohibition against officers working ended and he was made to perform logging duties. The worst was in the deep snow in freezing weather. Ultimately, he was repatriated in late 1949 and arrived back in Germany on New Years Eve to a non-existent homecoming.

The book contains no photos or images.

Translation wise, the prose flows smoothly enough as the 92-year-old Ehlert recounts his experiences. The 'chilling' in the subtitle is indeed accurate. German POWs in the USSR fared far worse than in the UK or US. It's an interesting adjunct to the usual WWII battle and campaign books.

Enjoyed it.

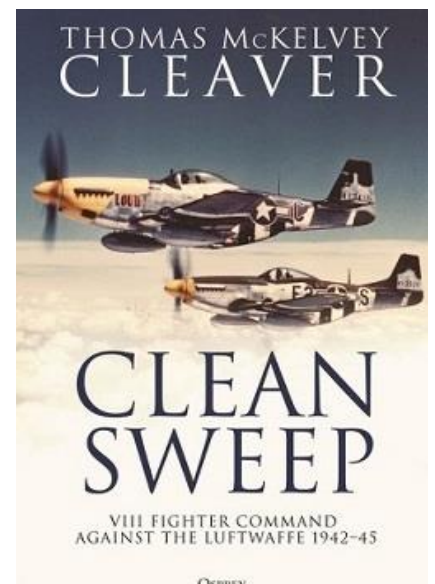
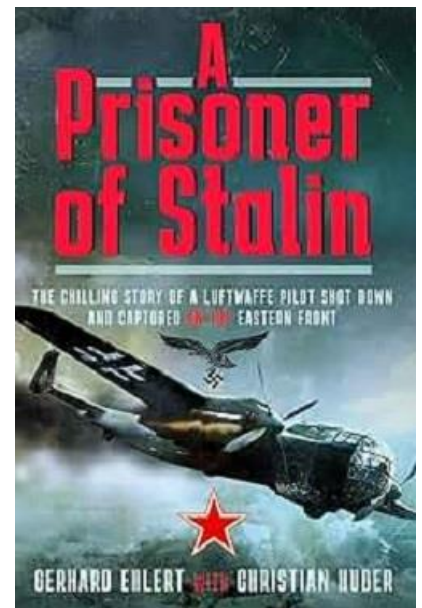
Clean Sweep. by Thomas McKelvey Cleaver. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 480 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *VIII Fighter Command Against the Luftwaffe 1943-1945*

If you like WWII fighter versus fighter accounts over Europe, here's your book. This mostly comes from a US perspective with plenty of first-person pilot accounts of missions and actions. Much of the time, aircraft surprise other aircraft, make a quick firing run, and shoot something down -- often to focus so much on getting the enemy plane that they are often hit by other enemy planes.

As this comes from US sources, most tallies are claims. Sometimes, actual results are incorporated, which are helpful in understanding losses.

Tactics are discussed, which help explain increasing US prowess. For example, once US fighters were allowed to leave bomber escort duties to take



the fight to the Luftwaffe before the fighters targeted the bombers, Luftwaffe losses increased. Ordering returning fighters with ammo to strafe German airfields before landing back in Britain helped increase pressure on the Luftwaffe. In that case, US losses increased due to flak. So, the US changed tactics. Instead of one plane at a time in a line, planes came in abreast for one pass, went 20 miles away, turned around and made a second pass and that's it.

Interesting that the first ME-262 shot down was flying low and slow because its nose wheel locked in the open position.

Of note were the considerable technical difficulties pilots experienced in new aircraft: the P-51B being particularly ugly, but P-47s don't escape scrutiny either. Many a plane went down due to engine trouble, not enemy action.

The book contains 32 black and white photos.

In some places, the aerial actions become repetitious because successful actions of hit and run tend to read the same. It's the variations that make the accounts interesting.

Enjoyed it.

Staff Cars In Germany WW2: Vol. 3. by Alan Ranger. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 82 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Camera On 32*

This is the follow-up volume to *Staff Cars in Germany WW2 - Vol. 2: Camera On 23* (see the review in the 3/29/2021 AAR or up on hmgs.org) and offers a photo intensive look at the Mercedes 170V, 200, 230, 260, 320, 540, Stuttgart, and G4 models. This includes radio car and radio van versions of the 170V Kubelwagen (translated as bucket seat cars).

As just about all these photos come from private photo albums, so you get a real sense of front-line and behind-the-lines use. Modelers can examine the accoutrements that troops added to the cars as well as the gear stowed or piled on.

The book contains 137 black and white photos with the vast majority rather clear. Most cars are photographed in side profile or three-quarters view front. Three photos show the cars from the three-quarters view of the rear (p43, p54, and p79). You even get a few accident photos where the car spun out or was otherwise hit.

A trio of typos: "gasline" should be "gasoline" (p4); "3rd May 21942" is either May 2 or May 3, 1942 and the sentence is missing a comma and a period (p35); and "role-up cigarette" is likely "rolled-up cigarette" (p40).

For modelers, it's another nice book from Ranger.

Enjoyed it.

Tenth Army Commander. edited by Christopher L. Kolakowski. Hardback (6.4x9.3 inches). 255 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The World War II Diary of Simon Bolivar Buckner jr.*

The biographical history of the general (p1 to p37) is far more interesting than his virtually day-by-day diary. It also contains some letters to his wife.

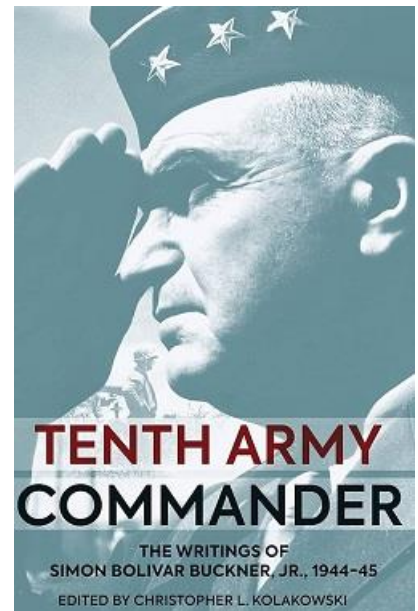
After serving as a theater commander in eastern Alaska, he ultimately led the 10th Army ashore at Okinawa and was the highest ranking US WWII general to die from enemy fire.

The diary (p39 to p221) consists mostly of what he had for dinner and with who. OK, that's a little simplistic, and even snarky, and entries include watching exercises and conferences with other top brass like him. However, if you are seeking grand strategies and operational details, this is not your book. It was only when I came to Operation Causeway discussion (p92-93) that I found a substantive opinion about a military operation. He was against it due to logistical concerns.

An interesting tidbit: His walrus hunting in Alaska generated a complaint (p138-193) about violating Interior Dept. rules. Nothing permanent came of it.

The book contains 29 black and white photos, 12 color photos, two color illustrations, and 15 black and white maps.

One odd part: The March 31, 1945 entry (p156) ends Chapter 4. Chapter 5 (p157) begins with April 1, 1945, the day the 10th Army landed on Okinawa. Then (p160 to p163) the diary reverts back to March 13 and goes through



April 3 because this is a letter he sent to his wife with an abridged version of what he recorded in his diary. It took me a while to figure this out.

Unless you are a Buckner jr fan, I'm not sure this diary adds much to WWII knowledge other than the WWII social calendar of an army commander. It is possible that it would serve to jog his memory for his memoir, but his death on Okinawa means we'll never know.

The Third Macedonian War and the Battle of Pydna. by Graham Wrightson. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 204 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Perseus' Neglect of Combined Arms Tactics and the Real Reasons for the Roman Victory*

As is typical of many books about an ancient battle, this one also contains a long lead in about the Roman Empire and its place in the world. Then comes a discussion about phalanx versus legion tactics, although the author keeps calling the Roman pilum a 'javelin' and glosses over its effect. Know that the author praises the sarissa (pike) and the phalanx as unbeatable -- unless the flanks can be hit.

The war actually starts with Chapter 3 (p68), analyzing the moves that Macedonian King Perseus made in dealing with Rome and other Greek city states. The battle is the last chapter, Chapter 7 (p148), and is resolved relatively quickly.

The short version is that Perseus's father Philip V got greedy about rebuilding the Macedonian Empire. Perseus apparently forged a letter his older brother's 'plot' to overthrow dad, and Philip executed the older brother Demetrius and names Antigonus as the new heir. When Philip dies, Perseus executes Antigonus, takes power, and proceeds to be greedy for land, too, hammering an ally of the Romans and running afoul of Pergamum's Eumenes.

The plot twists and turns, all well explained, lead to war with Rome, with some early and cheap victories, successful sieges, and finally a Roman commander of some grit. Perseus plays for peace, never delivering a knockout blow, but the Roman played for total victory.

Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch form the backbone of events in Greece and the battles including Pydna. The author analyzes various actions and opines that Perseus could have won the war by being more aggressive early, not being cheap (refusing to spend gold to hire 10,000 mercenaries that would have been rather useful in various battles), and by being a timid commander who retreated more than attacked, even with the advantage.

The book contains 12 black and white photos, five black and white illustrations, and nine black and white "maps" -- although calling them maps is being polite.

Typo: Missing period at the end of a sentence (p90).

Now, in general, it's hard to believe Rome would have negotiated a peace with Macedon given that Rome usually beat an opponent, even one which handed them bloody noses on the battlefield. That said, the tactical analysis, given the sources at hand, offers a plausible explanation of opportunities wasted on both sides.

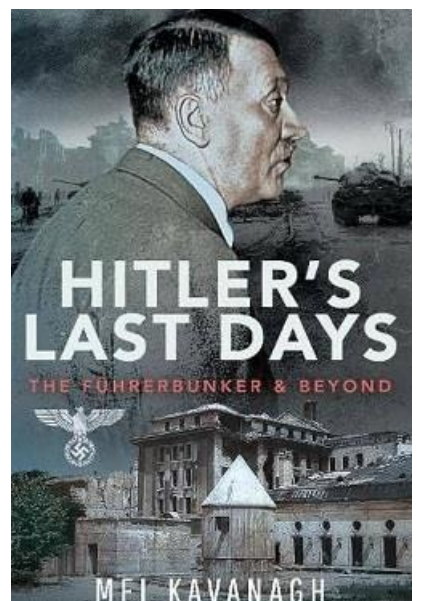
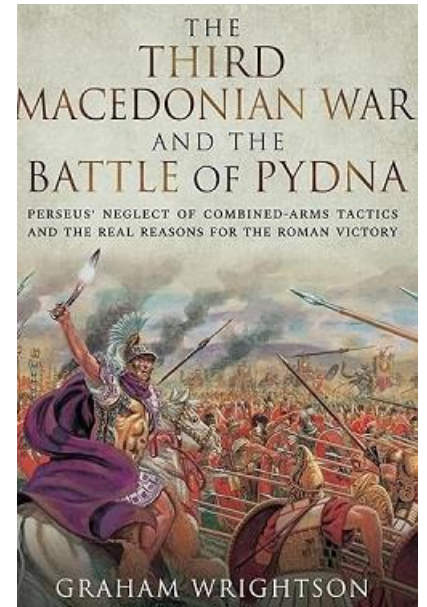
A tabletop scenario is possible with the description of units and numbers, and you can try out a battle where Perseus spent the money for 10,000 Gallic cavalry.

Enjoyed it.

Hitler's Last Days: The Fuhrerbunker & Beyond. by Mel Kavanagh. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 270 pages. 2023.

Hitler committed suicide in the Fuhrerbunker under Berlin and his body burned. So say a number of eye-witnesses captured at the end of WWII. However, note that a Peter Baumgart claimed to be Hitler's last pilot and flew him, Eva Braun and a General Rommer to Denmark on April 28, 1945. Good enough for a History Channel "documentary" I suppose.

This also covers the comings and goings of Goering, Goebels, Bormann, Donitz, and even pilot Hanna Reitsch in those last days. After the suicide, many of the Nazi rats fled, or tried to flee, Berlin despite the Soviet siege. Most were caught. Some succeeded, but later caught. One secretary made



it and disappeared for years.

Donitz's actions are interesting as the Allies temporarily needed a German government to sign surrender documents. After that, the enclave was occupied and the various leaders shipped off to jail.

No photos or other illustrations are within. No index is included.

Typo: "inEngland" needs a space (p202)

This collection of eye-witness statements and various official reports traces Hitler's last month or so in Berlin as well as the coterie of officers around him. It doesn't really add much to the general narrative, but small details emerge, such as he was a drug addict addicted to Eukodol -- oxycodone by another name. When the Allies bombed the chemical plant that made it, his supply shrunk a bit. Apparently, he also suffered from intestinal gas that was mitigated by pills that contained strychnine.

Ties go to the author. Enjoyed it.

Sniping Rifles in the War Against Japan 1941-45. by John Walter. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Weapon 88*

The latest volume in the series covers WWII sniper rifles used in the Pacific Theater of Operations: Japanese Type 97, 98, 99; British SMLE, P14, No 4, No 1; US Springfield, Winchester, M1C Garand, Johnson, M1 and M2.

All the development and technical analysis you've come to expect from the series is in this volume, followed by use in the field, including training and support -- or in the case of Japan, lack of training and support.

The book contains 25 black and white photos, 46 color photos, four color action illustrations, and four color cutaway illustrations of rifles.

An interesting development that did not see combat was the infrared SniperScope attached to a M1 rifle that was first proposed in 1943. The German Army had deployed an infrared sighting system in 1944, albeit a bulky and cantankerous system, but it worked wonders in limited use in night combat.

Gun enthusiasts will appreciate the volume.

The 'Grossdeutschland' Division in World War II: Elite 255. by James F Slaughter. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The German Army's Premier Combat Unit*

This breezy history of the Grossdeutschland Division covers from its formation in 1921, then disbandment, reconstitution in 1934, and through the end of WWII.

In 1934, it was named Wachtruppe Berlin. In 1937, its name changed to Wachtruppe Regiment. In 1939, it was renamed yet again as Infantry Regiment Grossdeutschland (motorized). It did not fight in Poland, but did participate in France, Yugoslavia, and Soviet Union.

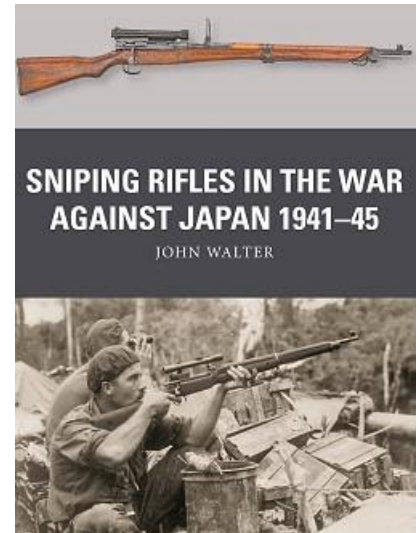
In April 1942, it was expanded to Infantry Division status with two regiments, each with three battalions and support battalion. In May 1943, it was enlarged and became PanzerGrenadier Division Grossdeutschland in time for Kursk. In December 1944, it was enlarged again to become Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland.

You won't find enough detail to create tabletop scenarios, but you will find eight pages of color uniforms plates with 24 figures representing uniforms from 1938 to 1945. The book also contains 54 black and white photos and eight color photos -- all with an emphasis on uniform details and equipment. The bigger the scale of your figures, the more you will appreciate the volume.

Enjoyed it.

PZL-104 Wilga 35A: Single No. 46. by Dariusz Karnas. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 24 pages. 2023.

For scale modelers, the Single series can be handy, being almost all illustrations. Except for photo captions, text is non-existent. The black and white photos (I suspect originals are color photos but printed in black and white) zero in



on individual areas and systems of the aircraft.

The book contains five 1/72-scale black and white drawings, four 1/48-scale black and white drawings, 35 black and white photos, nine color photos, 15 black and white illustrations, and four color camouflage illustrations of 1990-1991 overhaul indicating plane was associated with Krakow (Poland) (p18).

PZL-104 Wilga 35A Military: Single No. 47. by Dariusz Karnas. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 24 pages. 2023.

This is the military version of the 104. Just about everything in Single No. 46 applies to this volume. To my eye, the scale drawings are identical. The photos are of a different plane. The only major difference that I can see is the installation of a rocket pod under each wing in a couple photos, although the illustrations don't reflect that. The camouflage is a military green and dark green pattern on the cover instead of bright civilian paint job in Single No. 46.

The book contains five 1/72-scale black and white drawings, four 1/48-scale black and white drawings, 30 black and white photos, six color photos, 15 black and white illustrations, and three color camouflage illustrations.

M111 Polish Heavy Military Motorcycle: Single Vehicle No. 09. by Adam Jonca. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 28 pages. 2023.

The full name is P.Z.Inz. M 111 "Sokot 1000" and is a rugged 1930s military motorcycle with sidecar. They were used in all branches of service as a commander vehicle as well as for recon and other duties. Experiments with mounting machine guns were made, with a heavy MG too heavy but a light MG satisfactory. A few versions equipped with radios were also produced.

The book contains four 1/35-scale black and white drawings, four 1/17.5-scale black and white drawings, 57 black and white photos, 10 black and white illustrations, two color camouflage illustrations, and five color service icons insignias.

Strong in Will: Working for US Embassy 1939-45. by Marie-Louise Dilkes. Hardback (6.3x9.2 inches). 257 pages. 2024.

The author was a receptionist at the US Embassy in Paris and this is her diary of working in Paris, Lyon, and Vichy under German occupation from 1939-1944. It is full of astute observations, from conversations with individuals on the streets and in the cafes to the general mood of the city, about how the French dealt with war and then German occupation.

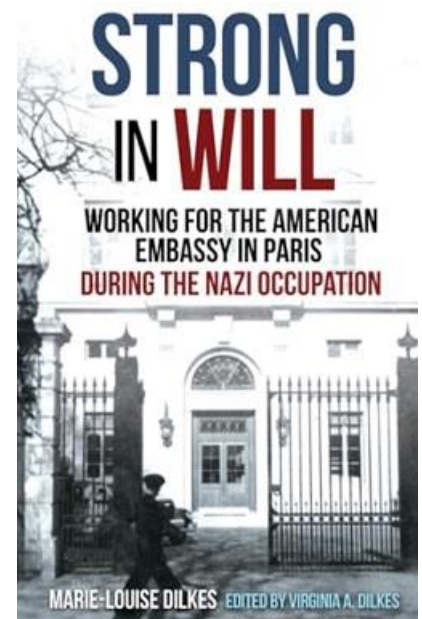
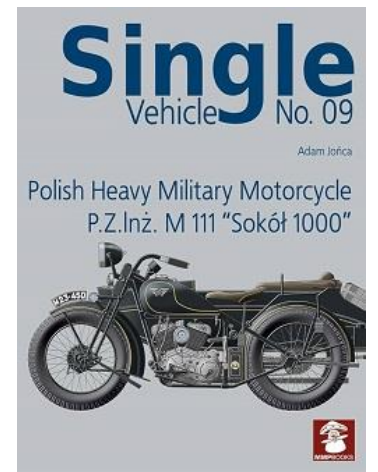
The sullenness of the French alternated with acts of defiance in the face of retribution. The winning hearts and minds campaign proved inept and courtesies individual German officers and troops were treated with contempt. She ably describes the increasing shortages of food and other supplies and the gradual imposition of restrictions and deportations.

The US Embassy became a Consulate in mid-1941 and closed in July. As the US and Germany were not at war until December 1941, most of the diplomatic corps was transferred to Portugal and then the US, but some members, including Dilkes, were transferred to Lyon and Vichy. In January 1942, the US diplomatic personnel were transferred to Switzerland until the reopening of the US Embassy in Paris in October 1944. The period in Switzerland is rather truncated as if she lost interest in keeping up her diary.

The book contains one photo of Dilkes and three black and white maps.

The main attraction is her vivid observations and descriptions of Paris' ambiance as the seasons changed and the course of the war swung from German triumphs to Allied victory. It's like being in a French noir film.

Enjoyed it.



The Destroyer USS Kidd: Anatomy of a Ship. by Stefan Draminski. Hardback (10.3x9.7 inches). 336 pages. 2024.

The Fletcher-class destroyer *USS Kidd* started in a Kearny, NJ shipyard on October 16, 1942. Launched on February 28, 1943, it was commissioned on April 23, 1943 and finished with its shakedown cruise in May 1943. Its first mission, escort duty, was in June. That's eight months to build and crew a destroyer.

It served in WWII, the Korean War, and Cold War. In 1957, the ship became a movie star as the Japanese destroyer *Akikaze* in the movie *Run Silent, Run Deep*. It was saved from the scrapheap in 1975 and found a permanent home in Baton Rouge, LA, in 1982. In 2018, it became a movie star again as the *USS Kesling* in the movie *Greyhound*.

But this book is less history lesson than a modeler's dream reference guide. The book contains 16 black and white photos, nine color photos, and 33 color 3D renderings of various configurations and camouflage patterns. Then you get into the meat of the book: over 600 black and white perspective drawings of main features and subsystems plus over 400 color 3D illustrations of systems and subsystems.

I have to 'fess up: I didn't count each one. I'll take their word for it. I'm no longer a modeler, but in flipping through the color illustrations, I'm going to make a broad statement that you can find anything about this ship, external and internal, that you need to know to create or put finishing touches on a model with a circa-1945 configuration.

Only four Fletcher-class destroyers remain, one in Greece and three in the US. If you can't visit one, this book will let you walk about vicariously.

Enjoyed it.

Mitsubishi Babs: Volume II. by Giuseppe Picarella. Hardback (8.5x12.0 inches). 246 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The World's First High-Speed Strategic Reconnaissance Aircraft*

Japan began development of the C5M2 and variants in the 1930s and the aircraft served in China, Philippines, Dutch East Indies, and elsewhere in the Pacific. This book covers the technical development of the aircraft and includes Western intelligence reports and period documents. Indeed, one crashed in the USSR and was studied by the Soviets. Their technical documentation is included as well.

Every system and subsystem is examined and extensively detailed and illustrated, with lots in 1/48 and 1/32 scale. I can't say I read every word and skipped around the sections because they contained far more detail than I could assimilate.

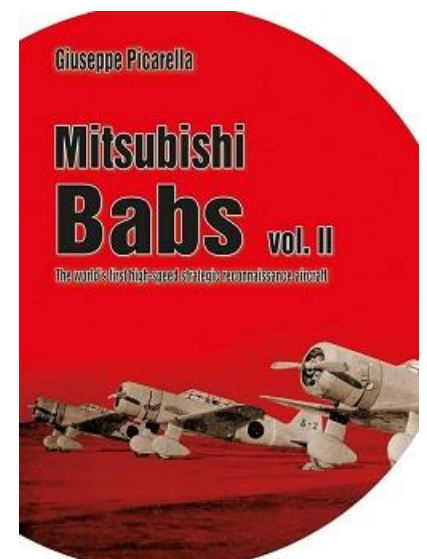
One typo: "contained a detailed sketched" is likely "sketch" (p46).

The book contains 83 black and white photos, hundreds of black and white drawings and illustrations, and hundreds more color drawings and illustrations -- including cutaways, profiles, systems, and subsystems.

A section on plastic model kits and other C5M2-related merchandise (p242-p245) includes a postage stamp from Mozambique.

If you are an aviation buff of the C5M2 who revels in technical details, this is your book. If you are a modeler who is looking for a WWII Japanese aircraft off the beaten flyways of Zeros, Vals, and such, this is also your book. Only about 500 or so were produced in the war. You can pull some scenarios from the operations section, usually of a C5M2 being escorted by Zeros.

Enjoyed it.



The Convoy: HG-76. by Angus Konstam. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 336 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *HG-76: Taking the Fight to Hitler's U-Boats*

Most WWII submarine books take the viewpoint of the submarine. This one offers the perspective from the convoy commander, or, technically the escort commander. In the case of HG-76, that's Commander Johnnie Walker. His anti-submarine warfare tactics propel the book forward.

As I've read many Atlantic Ocean sea battles, some of the most interesting parts for me were the assembly of the convoy and how it operated. The escorts and the merchants had separate commanders, with the merchant one in command, although working together was better for the success of the convoy. The first 100 pages or so are interesting background prep for the convoy itself.

In the case of HG-76, Hitler had already ordered Admiral Donitz to form a wolfpack near Gibraltar as well as move U-boats into the Mediterranean. It was to help prop up Italy, but proved deadly to the German submarines even in 1941.

The book contains 32 black and white photos and six black and white maps.

The deadly cat-and-mouse stalking and attacking HG-76 receives full attention, in some cases rather dramatically. Credit that to some smooth prose and thorough research.

However, and this is my main criticism, the sinking of the escort aircraft carrier in the Prologue completely upset the tension. Now you read the book knowing the carrier will be sunk. The first couple chapters setting the wolfpack scene are fine, but getting into tactical details ahead of the actual sailing and battles dampened my enthusiasm. Still.

Enjoyed it.

Tokyo 1944-45: Air Campaign 40. by Mark Lardas. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Destruction of Imperial Japan's Capital*

The latest volume in the *Air Combat* series offers the usual excellent background, recap, and analysis expected, along with the usual itsy-bitsy, teenyweenie yellow polka dot bikini font. OK, it's not actually yellow text, and there's not even a Bikini Atoll or Bikini Bottom in the text, but I can't help squinting.

This follows the usual *Campaign* format with an analysis of forces, weapons, and strategies followed by a recap of the actual missions from Nov 1, 1944 (recon), to first raid (Nov 24, 1944) to the last battle (Aug 17, 1945 -- a quarter of B32s versus a 'swarm' of fighters). In between are B-29s raids and USN carrier-based raids plus Iwo Jima-based P-51 sweeps that fire-bombed and shot up the capital and surrounding areas.

Along the way, you learn that more B-29s were lost to technical teething issues and pilot error than Japanese AA and defending fighters. The lack of coordination between the Japanese Army and Navy helped the US considerably, for they fought over everything from reinforcements to resources.

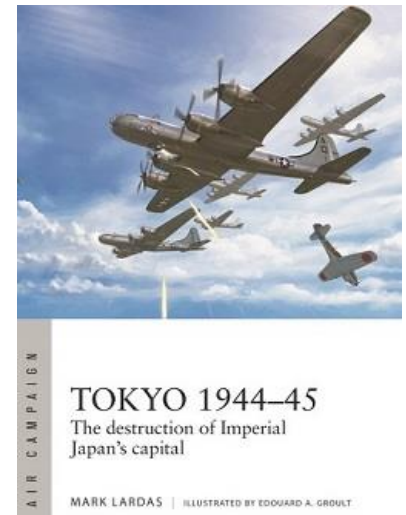
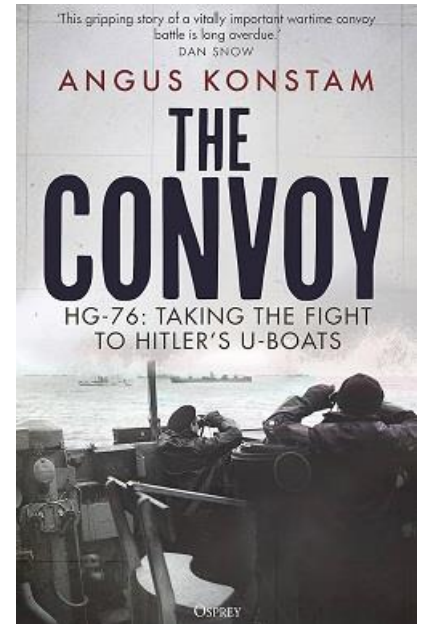
The booklet contains 56 black and white photos, one color photo, 13 black and white illustrations, six color maps, seven color diagrams, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

Saab 35 Draken: Duke Hawkins 31. by N. Deboeck. Softcover (horizontal 9.4x9.5 inches). 113 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Flying with the European Air Forces*

If you're a modeler looking for details about this aircraft, this is a fantastic photo-dominated resource that's almost like being next the aircraft. Every system and subsystem receives close-up photos thanks to the Swedish *Air Force Historic Flight* and the Danish *Team Karup* organizations that keep these



aircraft in flying shape. Ergo, the photographer gets complete access.

As for the Draken, history and technical analysis are minimal -- the photos are the big draw. The fighter prototype flew in 1955, the first one became operational in 1959 and the last one flew for a national air force in 2005 (Austria).

A couple typos: "developped" (p52 and 90) should only have one "p" and "draken" should be capitalized (p109). A couple of punctuation and spaces snafus were in the text, but immaterial.

The book contains 259 color photos of outsides, cockpits, fuselage, landing gear, and so on. It's all high-quality photos with sharp details.

Enjoyed it.

End of the Spanish Civil War: Alicante 1939. by Jonathan Whitehead. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 280 pages. 2023.

By 1939, the Spanish Civil War was nearing its end as the Nationalists increasingly came to dominate the country. Alicante is a small port town on the Mediterranean coast that remained under Republican control until the end. Republicans took ship for ports elsewhere, some to France and most to Algeria, to avoid being grabbed by Franco's nationalists.

The book chronicles the last months of Republican efforts to counterattack the Nationalists and receive more supplies and armaments from other countries. It ultimately proved futile. The retributions and creation of concentration camps followed the surrender of the city.

Of interest are the political games and lack of coordination played by Republican factions. Indeed, a late-war coup by Colonel Casado certainly didn't help.

The book contains 40 black and white photos and six black and white maps.

The chaos and uncertainty are well explained. I was less-than-enamored with the back and forth descriptions about events in the timeline and you bounce between 1939 and various episodes during the war ... but ... I can see the need for background information to make sense of 1939 actions.

Enjoyed it.

Polish Armoured Trains 1921-1939: Vol. 3. by Adam Jonca. Softcover (Horizontal: 11.2x8.3 inches). 155 pages. 2023.

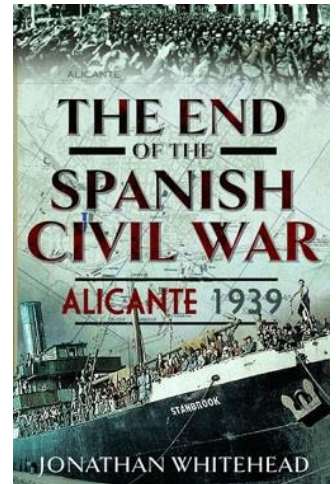
The first volume covers the introduction of Polish armored trains and uses during the 1920s. *Volume 2* covers the 1st Armored Train Group from 1930 to Poland's surrender. *Volume 3* covers the 2nd Armored Train Group plus supply and evacuation trains from 1930 to Poland's surrender. A full table of contents for all three volumes is in the book (p6-7).

Each train's WWII service is examined, usually as artillery support. Of interest to me is that while the train contained artillery wagons, it also contained a defense platoon and flatcars toting a few light tanks and tankettes around for ground support. Of particular note is a railway map per train that charts each train's movement and battles. It's all supplemented with numerous photos and camouflage illustrations.

The book contains 196 photos, 88 color camouflage illustrations, one black and white illustration, and nine black and white maps with red highlights. The photos are a mix of pre-war Polish photos and during war German photos of captured trains and railcars.

The Germans put some of them back in service, which would be an interesting option for a wargame scenario. Somebody probably has a 3D model available.

Enjoyed it.



Hitler's Henchmen. by Helmut Ortner. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 111 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Nazi Executioners and How They Escaped Justice After WWII*

I usually avoid titles like this, but I figured it might be about Nazis escaping to South America or something unusual like that.

Ummm, no.

The book offers short bios of slightly more than ordinary fanatical Nazis: a military judge, a civilian judge, an executioner, and a concentration camp guard. Each of these cogs in the Nazi wheel willingly was part of the process of killing people and all but one -- the executioner -- lived a nice life after the war.

For the most part, the German justice system turned a blind eye to their pre-war and wartime murders. Byzantine processes, versions of amnesty laws, and lack of willpower to delve too deeply into wartime atrocities allowed these henchmen to go free. Some, like the civilian judge, picked up where he left off -- presiding over trials.

The one exception was the executioner, who was arrested and then released because he agreed to be an executioner of convicted Nazis for the Allies. I guess he just liked executing people. However, once his usefulness was over, he was eventually re-arrested, tried, convicted, and executed himself.

The other semi-exception was the concentration camp guard who stood trial when he was 94 years old. He died before having to go behind bars or being executed.

The book also has two short profiles on two men, Maurice Bavaud and Georg Elser, who tried to assassinate Hitler in 1938 and 1939 respectively. I had previously read about Elser, who planted a bomb inside a column next to the podium, but Hitler left 10 minutes earlier than expected and missed the detonation.

The book has no photos or other images.

Evil triumphs when good men do nothing, says Edmund Burke, but here are several cases of evil triumphing because evil men aided and abetted evil plans.

Napoleon's Cavalry, Artillery, and Technical Corps 1799-1815. by Gabriele Esposito. Hardback (7.0x9.9 inches). 155 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *History, Organization & Equipment*

I'm not sure how I missed this from last year, but better late than never. Esposito continues the series' usual in-depth look at uniforms, all backed by color public domain illustrations from the NYC Library, plus text that explains TO&Es.

Cavalry is by type: Cuirassiers, Dragoons, Hussars, Chasseurs, and Lancers, plus chapters on Artillery, Engineers, Naval Troops, Security Forces, Foreign units (Vistula Legion for example), and Overseas Colonial units.

In many ways, this is well-worn territory for most readers, but I did find the Security chapter the most compelling in terms of new information, or at least new info to me.

For example, the Gendarmerie was re-organized in 1801 into 750 foot brigades and 1,750 mounted brigades (p121). Wow, where were all these brigades after 1812? It turns out, a 'brigade' consisted of one NCO and five policemen! How's that for twisting a term?

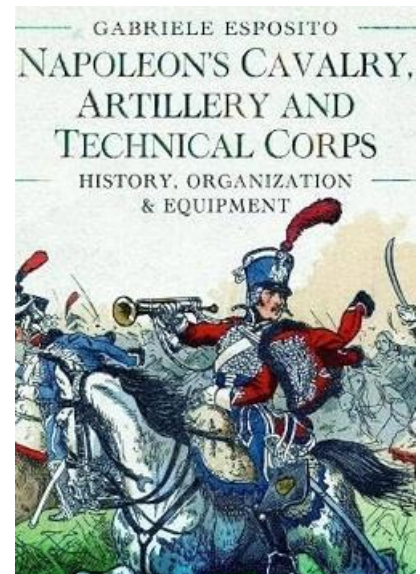
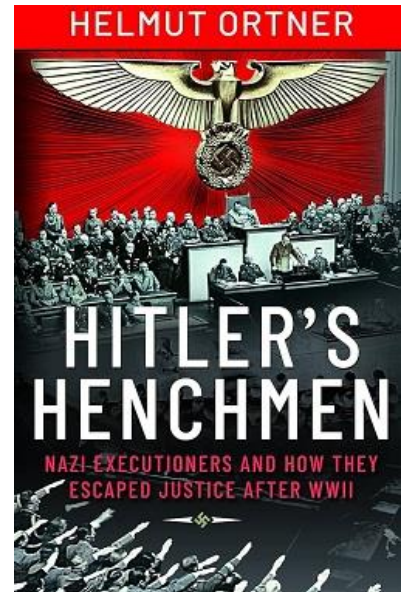
Also, the Municipal Guard of Paris, one regiment of two battalions, staged a coup against Napoleon on October 23, 1812 (p127). First time I heard of the unit or the coup. Perhaps that's why Napoleon abandoned his army and hurried back to Paris, where he disbanded the unit and incorporated the men into the 134th Line regiment (p127).

One typo: "early 1808" is missing a space (p82).

The book contains 78 color uniform illustrations, most one per page, with from one to three figures in each illustration.

If you're just starting out, the Esposito series of books, this one included, will give you a solid foundation of understanding the Napoleonic Army and how best to paint the various units for your tabletop. Just collecting the public domain images in one place is worth the price of admission.

Enjoyed it.



Gallipoli Sniper: The Remarkable Life of Billy Sing. by John Hamilton. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 263 pages. 2022 reprint of 2015 reprint of 2008 book.

This biography of Billy Sing follows his life, such that can be reconstructed, from his days in the Australian frontier to the battlefields of Gallipoli and the European Western Front. A keen shot and horseman, he joined up on October 24, 1914 and due to his prowess was assigned to 5th Light Horsemen. Upon arrival in Egypt, the unit was sent to Gallipoli without horses. It was here that Sing made his mark as a first-rate sniper.

Accounts about snipers in Gallipoli are taken from sources other than Sing, who apparently wrote and said very little. The official citations and "mentioned in despatches" form the foundation of events, but plenty of other memoirs and sources fill in what it was like to fight in a rocky place hemmed in by Turkish troops.

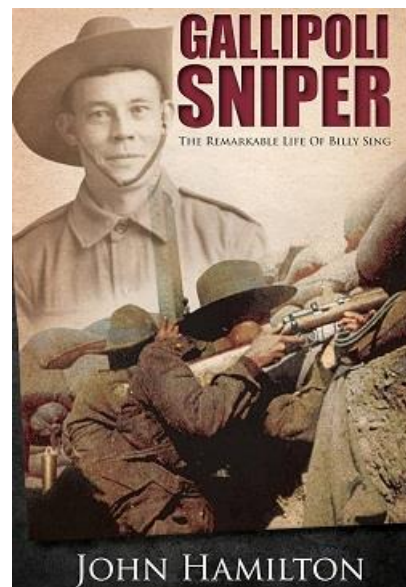
Wounded, he was evacuated, healed up, and returned, only to be wounded again. The ANZAC troops were withdrawn back to Egypt and this time sent to the Western Front. Sing's recovery period allowed him to miss the Somme, but he was wounded and gassed on other occasions, spending time in various British hospitals.

He married an Edinburgh gal in 1917, but when he went back to Australia after the war, and petitioned for free travel for his war bride, delays occurred and her tale runs out without explanation. Whether she traveled to Australia or not is unknown, but local folks interviewed by various publications never recalled seeing her at Sing's farm or gold mines -- all of which failed. He died May 19, 1943 and is buried in a war cemetery.

The book contains 16 black and white photos.

The pleasant prose made this a fast read and you'll learn more about WWI sniping than you probably want to know, but that's a good thing. The Western Front is less detailed, mostly because Sing spent a lot of time in hospitals and perhaps because his individual efforts were lost among the millions of efforts. Yet his is a fascinating life.

Enjoyed it.

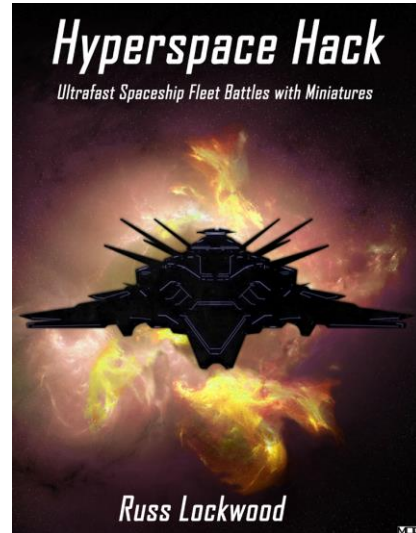


Back In Print: *Hyperspace Hack*

By Russ Lockwood

A blatant self-promotion of my sci-fi spaceship fleet rules....

- For 2 players...or 20 (command 50 ships or more per player)
- Simple yet subtle rules for fleet actions
- Crew quality from Raw to Elite
- Task Force and Armada Morale
- Quick Reference Charts on one page
- Rules for ramming, boarding, tech levels, and repairs
- Point system for tournaments, campaigns, and balanced scenarios
- Optional rules for 3-sided battles, crew promotions, planet-killing lasers
- Price: \$29 (US) [from www.onmilitarymatters.com]



Hyperspace Hack makes you an Admiral of a spaceship fleet, so you can deploy and game with dozens of models per gamer in big, swirling battles. No fiddling with individual systems, ship charts, and other minutiae like a ship captain. Everything about *Hyperspace Hack* is streamlined so you get the same end results without constant checking and doublechecking of each ship's systems, modifiers, and die rolls. Think like an Admiral, not a Captain!

The key to *Hyperspace Hack*'s speedy play revolves around integrating offensive weaponry and defensive shields into a single "To Hit" chart. An attack by one ship or many on a target ship resolves with a single die roll -- with results of no effect, damaged ship, or killed (destroyed) ship.

The basic game allows youngsters to learn movement and firing within a couple turns, while optional rules like torpedo attacks, firing zones, combat repairs, ammo, fuel, and so on will add the complexity some gamers crave. It will also take longer to play, but you can pick and choose your level of complexity versus speed of play.

Available from *On Military Matters* in US and *Caliver Books* in the UK.